

PRACTICAL
DISCOURSES
UPON THE
Lord's Prayer.

PREACH'D before the
HONOURABLE SOCIETY
OF
LINCOLN's-INN.

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To the W O R S H I P F U L
T H E
Masters of the Bench
O F T H E
Honourable S O C I E T Y
O F
Lincoln's-Inn,

T H E S E
D I S C O U R S E S
Being P R E A C H ' D before them,
And by their order Publish'd,
Are Humbly DEDICATED,
By their most Obedient Servant,

T. M A N G E Y.

To the Worshipful
THE
Masters of the Bench
OF THE
Honourable SOCIETY
OF
Lincoln's-Inn
THESE
DISCOURSES
being prepared before them,
and delivered at their
Hall, in the City of London,
in the Year 1771.
BY
T. MANLY.



The P R E F A C E.

 *HE subject of the following discourses requires very little apology; one reason that induced me to the choice of it was, that the Lord's Prayer being of frequent use becomes through inadvertency too much a matter of course; so that it is too often said without fruit, because without seriousness and attention. I therefore hop'd it would be of some service to Religion to remind men, both of that hope which they profess, and that obedience which they promise, as often as they use this Prayer. But I had likewise another reason for treating upon this subject; because it gave me a fit opportunity of discoursing upon some forgotten principles of Christianity, which are so far from being*

The P R E F A C E.

being generally pursu'd at this time, that they are scarce understood. The greater part of the world needs frequently to be reminded that this Prayer was taught by our Lord Jesus, and that the several requests contain'd in it are only to be procur'd in and through him. The near relation to God our Father, and those blessings which are included in that relation, are so many stipulations of the New Covenant; and are no otherwise to be obtain'd, but by performing the conditions of it. So that both the title to use this Prayer, and all the expectations of success from it, belong to us only as we are the faithful disciples of our Saviour. It was the custom of the primitive Church before baptism to instruct the new converts from hence in the principles of their Religion, which hath occasion'd many discourses of the primitive Fathers upon this subject. I have generally made these my guide, both in the sense of each petition,

The P R E F A C E.

petition, and in the practical observations from thence; because however they may seem to fall short in the solidity of their reasonings, (though much might be said in their vindication even upon this head,) yet I am so unfashionable as to think, that they in their moral precepts exceed any writings of the moderns. I thought fit however, for the convenience of common readers, to separate into marginal notes some citations from them, which were deliver'd in the body of the discourses.

I cannot but take notice in this place of the common, and probably the only now remaining objection against the Lord's Prayer, which is, that none are so good as to be fit to use it. The objection would be reasonable, if any less person than the Son of God had been author of this Prayer; without this encouragement it would have been presumption, either to have call'd God Father,

or

The P R E F A C E.

or to have begg'd for so many instances of favour. But besides the words themselves in teaching us to beg for pardon, grace and protection, suppose us to be weak, insufficient, and sinners; so that we do not profess by them a state of perfection, but the desires after it. If some therefore cannot come up to these desires, this is not so much an objection against the Prayer, as against the general obligations of the Christian Religion; nothing more being requir'd to pray usefully as our Saviour hath taught, than some tolerable disposition to obedience. However, let those who thus object know, that the omissions of the Lord's Prayer will be no lessening to their unrepented sins at the last day; but as the obstacles to the good use of it are laid by themselves, it concerns them to remove them by a speedy repentance.

S E R M O N



S E R M O N I.

M A T T. Vi. 9.

*After this manner pray ye,
Our Father which art in
heaven.*



BEFORE I enter upon the body of this prayer taught by our Saviour, it will be necessary to examine, whether He, by commanding to *pray after this manner*, design'd to give only a general model or directory to all our Devotions, or a particular form of words to be us'd by all Christians. The former of these opinions hath been espous'd by the modern asserters of *extempore* Prayer; who herein form their judgment by their own
B practice:

After this manner pray ye.

practice : Because it is a strong presumption in favour of some forms of Prayer, that the Son of God hath both taught one in express words, and requir'd his followers to use it. But the whole body of antient interpreters, and the sober part of the modern are agreed, that this command of our Saviour extends not only to the subject matter, but to the form of words here set forth. This interpretation seems most agreeable to the gracious design of our Saviour in this place, which was to give his followers the comfort of praying both with confidence and propriety, and of addressing the King of Heaven in those words his Son had taught.

However it must be observ'd, that tho' prejudice and obstinacy have occasion'd this dispute, yet the inaccurate reading of the *English* version hath in a great measure continued it. The words *after this manner*, might easily lead an unlearned person to think, that they were only a general direction to pray to *that* or *the like effect*. Whereas if the *Greek* (ὅτως) had been translated *thus pray ye*, or *ye shall thus pray*, I would charitably believe there would have been no controversy upon this subject. This is farther confirmed from the parallel place in *St. Luke*, where there seems no discretionary liberty left to men,



After this manner pray ye.

3

men, either to use or not to use this form, but they are positively required when *they pray to say, Our Father, &c.*

This preface then means an express order to use the following form, and to make it not only a model of our devotions, but a part of them. The words naturally lead to this sense; and the constant practice of the Church in all ages shews, that they were always so interpreted. The primitive Christians us'd the Lord's Prayer in their daily service; and, as St. *Austin* observes, call'd it for that reason the *daily cleansing*, and the *daily healing*. They sanctify'd their own pious composures by the more perfect one taught by their Master, and never failed to offer up this Prayer at the celebration of the holy Communion. * It was joyn'd to the Prayer of Oblation; and, as far as we can judge at this distance, was employ'd in no

* Sic docuit Apostolos suos ut quotidie in corporis illius sacrificio credentes audeant loqui, Pater noster. Hieron. lib. 3. adv. Pelag. Oratio quotidie dicenda est vobis, cum baptizati fueritis, in ecclesia enim ad altare Dei quotidie dicitur dominica oratio ut audiant illam fideles. Aug. Homil. Orationem verò dominicam idcirco mox post precem dicimus, quia mos Apostolorum fuit ut ad ipsam solummodo orationem oblationis hostiam consecrarent. Greg. Mag. epist. Εἶτα μὴ ταῦτα τὴν δύχην λέγουμεν ἐκείνην ἣν ὁ σωτὴρ παρέδωκε τοῖς οἰκείοις αὐτῷ μαθηταῖς. Cyril. Hieros. Cath. 5.

4 *After this manner pray ye.*

other part of the service. So great veneration was conceiv'd for this excellent form, that those that were not yet admitted into the Church by Baptism, or excluded from it by just censure, were not admitted to bear a part in it. And therefore it was made a part of those more solemn offices, from which excommunicated or unbaptized persons were excluded. ^b He must have been a true disciple of his Saviour that could then be allow'd to pray publickly in those words he had taught ; and must be thought to have both the faith and the practice of a Christian, to claim so much hope as he doth in this Prayer. The discipline of the *African Church*, as we learn from St. *Austin*, was to deliver to the Catechumens, in Passion week, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer ; and to require an account of them the week following, which was the usual season of Baptism. The adult persons then to be baptized were carefully instructed in both these offices, that when they were admitted to the whole service (as they never

^b Ὅτι γὰρ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἡ προσέυχὴ προσήκει, καὶ οἱ νόμοι τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκουσιν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον τῆς εὐχῆς, ὃ γὰρ ἀμύνηται ἐκ τοῦ δυνάτω πατέρα καλεῖν τὸ θεόν. Chrysostom. Hom. in Matth. Orabant utique jam fideles jam Apostoli, nam ista oratio dominica fidelibus magis datur. D. Aug. adv. Pelag.

After this manner pray ye.

5

were before Baptism) they might profess their faith with more judgment, and their hope in this Prayer with more sincerity and comfort. It was fitting that so much reverence should be shewn to a form so perfect in its matter, so excellent in its teacher, and so comfortable in its use. The antient Church had reason to exclude all but her true members from partaking in this Prayer, the success of which is only founded in the reconciliation to God by his Son. The *hastening of God's Kingdom*, the *forgiveness of our trespasses*, and the *deliverance from our spiritual enemies*, are only due to us as Christians, by virtue of our relation to our Lord Jesus; the blessings here ask'd for do so much exceed both human merit and understanding, that they could neither be discover'd without the preaching, nor claim'd without the satisfaction of a Redeemer.

It is farther observable, that as we in this Prayer profess the faith and the hope, so likewise do we promise the practice of a Christian. Every article of it is a lesson of some virtue, and supposeth our own honest endeavours to improve those spiritual perfections for which we here pray. The Lord's Prayer is not only a direction to our desires, but a

Our Father, &c.

rule of behaviour; and, as ^c a learned father observes, contains an abridgment of all the Gospel precepts.

In short, it sets forth the full extent of our hope, and the conditions of it; and shews in one short view, both what we are entitled to ask by the merits of our Saviour, and what we are oblig'd to do by the rules of his Gospel.

I shall therefore endeavour, by God's blessing, to explain the meaning and practical uses of the several parts of this excellent Prayer, and shall confine the present discourse to these introductory words,

Our Father which art in heaven.

In which words two things are to be consider'd.

First, What is meant by calling God our Father in heaven.

^c Compendiis paucorum verborum quot attinguntur edicta Prophetarum, Evangeliorum, Apostolorum, sermones Domini, parabolæ, exempla, præcepta; quot simul expunguntur officia? Dei honor in patre, fidei testimonium in nomine, oblatio obsequii in voluntate, commemoratio spei in regno, petitio vitæ in pane, exomologesis debitorum in deprecatione, sollicitudo tentationum in postulatione tutelæ. Tertull. de Oratione.

Secondly,

Our Father, &c.

7

Secondly, What those practical uses are that arise from doing so.

The first thing to be consider'd in this appellation is that we call God, *Father*.

Now in the first place God may be called *Father*, as he is the Creator of the world, and all things in it.

The very entrance into this Prayer reminds men of that humility, with which they should send up this and all other petitions. They, by calling God *Father*, impute to him solely the means of their being; *that he hath made us, and not we our selves*. They confess in the language of the Prophet, *O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou the potter, and we all are the work of thy hands*. We can never want a lesson of humility or thankfulness when we look into our selves, since every good thing there, is the mark of God's bounty.

Isai. lxiv.
8.

That men can call nothing properly their own, but owe the original of all to God, is a maxim the best known and the least apply'd of any in nature. They need only in order to this to reflect, that they a few years ago, without either merit or concurrence of their own, stept out of nothing into this pride of nature and perfection of being.

Our Father, &c.

That goodness by which they were made *little lower than the Angels*, was older than any capacities of deserving, and therefore could be only mov'd and incited by it self. If their attainments exceed the common size, they have this equal or indeed stronger reason for humility, that God hath been more bountiful in his gifts to them, and hath bless'd them with a double stock of talents. The merit of the good man (so truly are all men debtors to God) doth but increase his debts; and the more good he doth, the more oblig'd he should think himself for the capacity of doing it. The reasonable soul and all its powers are the gift of God, and the excellency of a reasonable creature consists not in adding new faculties to himself, but only in improving and employing those that are lent him. Our heavenly Father by being parent of all those powers by which we act, is so too of all those attainments that flow from them; and we never practise more reasonable justice, than when we in all success of this kind give *him the glory*.

Farther God is call'd *Father*, in respect of his care and preservation of his creatures.

His goodness is not barely employ'd in the Creation, and then goes no farther, but that which was the work of his hands, becomes
afterward

Our Father, &c.

9

afterward the object of his love. He brings not his creatures upon the scene of life, and there leaves them to blind chance, or the uncertain and narrow friendship of their brethren; but his fatherly goodness conducts them from one end of life to the other.

His providence stands for their care and foresight, and either wholly prevents or very much lessens that croud of dangers, that are continually about them.

Thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I Psal. lxxi.
long for; thou art my hope, even from my youth. Through thee have I been holden up ever since I was born; thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb; my praise shall be always of thee. What the Psalmist here says of himself is the case of every one; no one is so low and destitute, as if he considers rightly, will not be sensible of God's bounty; none so great and sufficient, as not to need the continuance of it. His watchful protection never sleeps; and without that protection, human life would be one continu'd journey thro' the vale of misery.

This blessing of preservation makes God our Father in a nearer relation than that of creation; the one is a single act of that power we should admire; the other is a repeated act of that mercy we should love; the one

Our Father, &c.

gives us only life; the other, all the comforts and conveniences of it. There are few private persons but have some singular experience of this providence in their lives. They can all look back (and it is a just gratitude frequently to do so) to the several parts of their past life, and find them distinguish'd by many deliverances, of which God only was the author.

However he is not so their Father as to be indulgent to their faults, and to omit those methods, that may either make them obedient children, or preserve them when they are so. He extends his goodness to all, but yet varies that goodness in the expressions. He finds it necessary sometimes to treat his favourites with a severe discipline, and to make them like the *captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*. Afflictions shew neither a want, nor intermission of his kindness; but his severity of this kind is ever merciful, and consistent with the tenderness of a Father.

The sufferings of good men are no more an impeachment of a careful providence, than a reasonable severity is a reproach to a good Father. *If ye endure chastising, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he, whom the Father chasteneth not? but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are*

Heb. xii. 4.

Our Father, &c.

11

partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

God then in general is to be accounted our common Father, for his universal care of his creatures ; but that care is not wholly to be measur'd by the outward appearances of it, but by the natural tendency of adverse as well as prosperous events to our spiritual advantage.

Lastly, God may be stil'd our Father in respect of the redemption by our Saviour.

The blessings of creation and preservation are common to all mankind, and therefore all have an equal title to call God their Father in both these senses. But the Christians do so in a more eminent manner ; and the expression as well as the reason of it is peculiar to the Gospel Covenant.

^d It hath been observed by the antients, that there is neither command nor allowance in

^d Ἀξίον ἐπιμελέσθην τηρῆσαι τὴν λεγομένην παλαιὰν διαθήκην, εἰ ἔστι πᾶ ὁρᾶν ἐν αὐτῇ ὁχὴν τινὲς λέγοντος τὸν Θεὸν πατέρα, ἐπὶ γὰρ τῷ παρόντος καὶ δυνάμει ἐξετάσαντες ἔχ' εὐργόμην. Origenes de Oratione. Nusquam invenitur præceptum populo Israel ut diceret, Pater noster, aut oraret patrem Deum, exceptis eis quæ in prophetiâ dicuntur de futuro populo christiano. D. Aug. de sermone Domini. *It is to be noted, that the Jews in their Liturgies have for many ages call'd God, אבין שבשמים* Our Father who is in heaven. But they do this not by any allowance of their law, but from the promises

Our Father, &c.

in the Old Testament to call God *Father*. Therefore when he prophetically promises, that *he will be to them a Father, and they shall be to him as sons*, he represents that nearness of relation that would hereafter be founded by the Messiah. This expression of *Father*, in the Christian sense, (and that is the sense of this Prayer,) speaks the privileges of the redemption; by which *we that were afar off are brought to be near*, and are treated as children in the assurance of an *inheritance eternal, incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in the heavens for us*.

We call God *Father*, by virtue of that relation which our Redeemer hath established by his Merits, and discover'd by his Gospel. However it is to be observ'd, that our Lord Jesus Christ is call'd the Son of God in a different sense from men who were made and redeem'd by him. ^c He is call'd the Son of God by his common nature with his Father, but Christians are call'd so by adoption. Our Saviour doth not in the whole Gospel once

ses made by the Prophets, that God would be their Father in the days of the Messiah. So that the Jews by calling God Father, profess their hope of a redemption to come; the Christians by doing so, their faith in a redemption that is past.

^c Αὐτὸς ἔν χ' φύσιν ὁὸς ἐστὶ τῷ Θεῷ, ἡμεῖς δὲ χ' χάριν.
Athanaf. de Incarnatione.

say,

say, *Our Father*, but in the Lord's Prayer; where he speaks not his own words, but those of the multitude, which he there teaches to pray. Wheresoever he mentions God besides, he calls him *my Father*, or *your heavenly Father*; shewing by this distinction that he only in a true sense is the Son of God, and thereby of the same divine nature with his Father. The *Jews* (whatsoever some Christians may now think) so understood the expression, that by calling God *Father*, *he* John v. 18. *made himself equal with God*. Our Saviour himself therefore to distinguish his own natural sonship from our adoptive one, tells his disciples, *I go to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* John xx. 17.

The privileges of Christianity should not lessen that dignity the Son of God hath by nature; and we should not think him lessen'd, but our selves advanc'd by this common appellation. He indeed by nature, but we only by his grace and redemption, call God *Father*; and as when we stile our selves sons, we mean no more than the privileges of Christianity, so when we stile him so, we should mean no less than that he is *one with his Father*, and by that, as the Apostle expresseth it, *over all, God blessed for ever.* Rom. ix. 5.

But

1 John iii.
1.

But to proceed, the redemption by our Saviour is the only reason of this expression in the Lord's Prayer: *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestow'd upon us, that we should be call'd the sons of God.* This expression in the Lord's Prayer seem'd to the antient Church so much to exceed the merit and dignity of human nature, that they generally set a modest preface before it in their Liturgies, ^f beseeching God to suffer them to use that familiar name, by which he is there pleas'd to be call'd, with truth and innocence. The New Testament generally useth the word adoption, in making us the sons of God; and the rights of adoption by the *Roman* law, may serve to explain the Christian sense of it. In the first place no one could have any legal claim to be adopted, but he depended for it upon the free motion of another; but then after he was so adopted he was entitled to a share in the inheritance, and to call the person so adopting him, Father. Now this is

^f Καταξίωσον ἡμᾶς, δέσποτα, μετὰ παρρησίας ἀκατακρίτως τολμᾶν ἐπικαλέσαι σε τὸν ἐκπρωτόν Θεὸν πατέρα, καὶ λέγειν, Πάτερ ἡμῶν, &c. Chrysostomi Liturgia. Which office is to this day continu'd in the Greek Church. Something like this hath been us'd in the Western Church for many ages: Præceptis salutariibus moniti & divinâ institutione formati, audemus dicere, Pater noster, &c. Card. Bona de rebus Liturg.

a just

a just representation, as far as temporal things can be of spiritual, of our redemption, and the rights of it. By our Saviour's Merits, not any claim of our own, we are assur'd of *an inheritance with the saints in light*; and this right of inheritance, as in the case of adopted sons by the *Roman* law, empowers us to call God *Father*.

St. *Paul* seems to ground his expression upon the customs of the Empire which then prevailed, when he tells the *Romans*, *Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, where- Chap.viii.
by we cry, Abba, Father.* And he repeats *ŷ. 15.* very near the same words to the *Galatians*, when the *fulness of time* came, God sent his *Son*, — that we might receive the adoption: *Ch. iv.
ŷ. 6.* But because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*; so that thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Our condition by grace is so different from that by nature, that what we were before baptism, in the Gospel account stands for nothing. This new relation to God by Christianity is the reason why the members of it are said to be *regenerate*, to be *new born*, and *new men*. The Christian by baptism is as it were translated into another family; and

and from the different relation in which he stands from that time, is with some propriety of speech call'd for that reason a new man. This then is the Gospel sense, in which we call God *Father* in the Lord's Prayer; namely, because we are treated by him as sons, and in that capacity assur'd of a better hope in reversion.

Tho' every instance of his common care over all his creatures deserves much thankfulness, yet his peculiar bounty to Christians should be more especially both remember'd and valu'd.

He doth not bless men with existence, and as soon as that is given, with repenting churlishness resume it; but they by his mercy in Christ Jesus exchange this deceitfulness of human breath, this infancy of life, for a *better and more enduring substance*. They by the comfort of the Gospel see not beyond the grave a dreadful prospect of insensible nothing, but by the eye of faith can already discover those prepar'd mansions of everlasting joy, into which they are to be receiv'd, when this *corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality*. That death, which is by nature the punishment of the sin and the terror of the sinner, is, by the example of Christ *the first fruits from the dead*, made the comfort and reward of virtue.

Blessed

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord 1 Pet. i. 3. *Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath begot us again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* The resurrection to life eternal as it is the highest privilege of human nature, and the truest support of unrewarded virtue, so it is the gift of God in Christ *Jesus*. He doth not, like an indiscreet Father, so disproportion his mercy as to preserve his children tenderly during a short life, and to forget them when that life is over; but his equal and extensive goodness never deserts them; it supports and comforts them in this world, and makes them eternally happy with himself in the next.

This then is the sense in which every one must be suppos'd to call God *Father* in this Prayer; first in the capacity of men professing him to be the *giver of life, breath, and all things*; and then in quality of Christians owning him the author of eternal life by the redemption. He that calls God *Father*, saith St. *Chrysostom* ^g, in doing so owns the remission of his sins, his adoption, his near relation to Christ, and the hope of a future resurrection.

^g *Chrysostom.* in locum.

Our Father,

The second thing to be consider'd in this appellation is, that we acknowledge this our Father *to be in heaven*.

The Scriptures to accommodate themselves to human conceptions, talk of heaven as the place of God's more immediate residence. It is therefore call'd there his *throne*, and his *dwelling place*. The tabernacle under the Law was in this respect the *pattern of things in the heavens*; and that *Schechinah*, or glorious appearance that constantly attended it, was design'd to possess the *Jews* with God's more especial presence in that place. They from hence seem to have conceiv'd a vain notion, that all worship was confin'd to *Jerusalem*, and that their Prayers were not so well assur'd of acceptance from any other place. Our Saviour therefore to oppose this narrow opinion, requires us to pray *to our Father in heaven*; shewing by this, that our petitions have equal access to him from all places.

By declaring him to be in heaven, and yet commanding us to send up our Prayers thither he reminds us of that Omnipresence *that fills all things*. The good man is from hence assur'd that he hath a sanctuary near at hand in providence, and that he hath an Almighty Protector constantly within call.

Wherever he goes he is assur'd that he is at no great distance from his God, and that he hath allowance to approach him at all times, and from all *places*. His petitions are not so many fruitless unheard wishes; but they are sent to one, whose Majesty suffers him not to be unable to hear, nor his Goodness unwilling to help.

But farther, this acknowledgment of our *Father in heaven* shews his great kindness in suffering us to approach him. It is no small condescension for a great God to attend to the requests of his creatures, and *though he be on high to behold the things that are done on earth*. When we thus pray we are reminded that we, so distant in station and so unprofitable in our service, are yet allow'd to send up our low requests to heaven, and are assur'd there of a favourable hearing. How great is both the honour and the comfort, that that God, who is *so far above all things*, is ready to hear the Prayers of his indigent and distress'd servants, and *when he hears their prayers will help them*. His Majesty doth in this respect set off his condescension; and we with more gratitude call God *Father*, when we at the same time believe him to be in heaven. In short, by calling God our Father we express the greatness of those blessings we have receiv'd; and

Our Father,

by professing this our Father to be in heaven, we own the great dignity of the person that hath conferr'd them upon us ; and the sense of both these together will naturally prepare our hope, reverence and attention, to send up the following Prayer.

I now proceed to the practical uses that arise from calling God our Father in Heaven.

The first practical use ariseth from the word *Father*, which familiar name naturally promiseth all reasonable hope of success. The other titles by which God chose to be call'd under the old Law being drawn from his power and superiority, carry'd some sort of diffidence along with them.

The names of *God*, *Lord*, *Lord of Hosts*, *Jehova*, did in their natural import express his Majesty distinctly from his Goodness, and were therefore only qualify'd to raise in the minds of his worshippers terror without hope, and reverence without comfort. But the word *Father*, which our Saviour directs his disciples to use, expresses all that mercy he reveal'd by his preaching, and seal'd by his blood. The Christian is hereby bid to hope in the entrance of his Prayers, and to promise himself all the tenderness that so near a relation includes. This is prov'd
by

which art in Heaven.

21

by our Saviour from a familiar instance of an earthly father, who without either goodness or discretion is very successfully provident for his craving children. *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those that ask him?* Luke xi, 13.

The bounty of an infinite Being to undeserving creatures, must arise from such motives as promise its continuance. It is not like the uncertain friendship of mortals, built upon capricious humours, or purchas'd by the mercenary prospect of returns. Neither gratitude nor expectation can have any place with God, but these his favours flow from an unchangeable goodness, and an unweary'd delight in making his creatures happy. They could have no claim upon him when he created them out of nothing; and now that they are made, what are all their returns of praise and thanksgiving (and those are all the returns they can make) but so much breath spent upon themselves?

Now if we consider the mercy of God in this light, (and the expression of Father naturally leads us to do so) we have the utmost encouragement to ask, as St. *James* directs, James i. 6. *with faith, nothing wavering.* The consideration of so much past goodness gives a sure prospect

prospect of its continuance, and is a reasonable argument that God will not desert his own work. To pray therefore with faith and hope, is the character of a Christian in the Gospel, because all diffidence of God doth in effect disown his mercy, and gives the lye to this familiar and encouraging appellation. The Prayers that are clogg'd with distrust, never reach heaven ; and the doubtful worshippers call God *Father*, without meaning, or effect. They disavow the relation which they bear to him when they have not that reasonable confidence in his mercy, which their *adoption* or *sonship* carries along with it.

Rom. viii.
32.

In short, the redemption of the world which we profess by calling God our Father, promises all the encouragement that creatures can expect. This includes in it so many blessings, that there is not any thing that deserves our Prayers, but is even granted before it is ask'd for. *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all ; how shall he not with him freely give us all things ?*

The second practical use that ariseth from hence is, that we are here directed to call God *our Father*, in common with all Christians.

The

The antients have generally observ'd upon this place ^h, that the expression, *our Father* is a necessary lesson of humility and condescension to each other, since by this common term they do in effect call themselves brethren of the same Father. The distinctions of one man from another are founded upon the relations of this world, and are therefore to be forgot, when they come with equal wants before God the common Lord of all. All Christians as such are *heirs of God, and Co-heirs with Christ*; and this relation and the happy consequences of it depend not at all upon their outward condition. Our Saviour came not to save one part of mankind, and to neglect the rest: He made not outward pomp the measure of his mercy, or the mark of his disciples; but contrary to this rule, *not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called*. His compassion was as universal as the necessities of mankind; and he hath made no exception in it, but for those who, as the

1 Cor. i, 26.

^h Admonentur autem hoc verbo divites & nobiles cum Christiani facti fuerint, quatenus se non extollant adversus pauperes & ignobiles; quoniam simul dicunt: Pater noster, quod verè ac piè dicere non possunt, nisi se fratres esse cognoscant. Aug. Serm. 182. de Tempore. Τί γὰρ βλάβη οὐ καὶ τῷ συγγενείᾳς ὅταν κτ' ἢ ἄνω ἅπαντες ὁμοῦ συνημμένοι — πᾶσι γὰρ μίαν ἐχαρίσατο δυνάμειαν πάντων ὁμοίως κληθῆναι καὶ ζωῆς πατὴρ. Chrysost. Homil.

Heb. vi. 6.

Apostle expresseth it, *crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put him to open shame.* As none are so great as not to want this blessing, so none are so low in their condition as for that reason to be excluded from it, but the poor and the rich are equally the appointment of his Providence, and the objects of his Mercy.

What then can be a more reasonable argument for humility, than that those distinctions of high and low, are the effect of worldly and perishing relations; and that the name of a Christian (the most glorious title that mortals can wear) is common to all? What can more expose the unchristian arrogance and criminal contempt which men practise towards their fellow Christians, whom notwithstanding they must call their brethren whensoever they pray, and who can call God Father with as much truth and propriety as themselves? So much may serve for the second practical use of these words.

The third practical use that ariseth from this appellation is drawn from the words *which art in heaven*; which as they express the distance and majesty of this our heavenly Father, should teach us to approach him with reverence.

When Christians at the entrance of their Prayers give God this appellation, they should
 4 consider

consider what affections are suitable to it. They should learn from hence to come before him not only possess'd with that important business which they are upon, (as what can be more important than the supply of their wants?) but with suitable reverence for that majesty, which they hereby confess to be so far above them. With what care do men endeavour to recommend their suits and set off their persons to an earthly Sovereign, but how far short are their caution and diligence in their addresses to the King of Heaven? They come before him in all the rough dress of their souls, with the utmost absence and distraction of thought. They send up petitions in which the reasonable part of the man is not concern'd, and pray *without the Spirit*, or the *understanding*. Their hearts and their tongues speak not the same language; and their Prayers so little express their wishes, that they attend not to what they pray for. They in this absence of soul do at best but beg a denial, and they have no reason to expect that God *should hear them*, when they hear not themselves.

Such indeed is the defect (and a guilty one it is) of many Christians, and it ariseth from nothing so much as want of consideration in whose presence they are. When they pray
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they should consider (what these words will naturally lead them to) that they are in the presence of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and that upon their decent behaviour before him all the happiness they want or wish for depends ; they should remember, that the most silent whispers of their souls are overheard, and that their Prayers can never reach Heaven, when not sent up thither with thought and attention. Such are the reflexions we should make when we begin to pray, and they are such as naturally arise from calling *God* our *Father in heaven* ; the words themselves are sufficient to recal the wandring of our thoughts, and, as *St. Chrysostom* observes, to turn our attention from earth to heaven.

From the whole it doth appear, that this preface to the Lord's Prayer naturally leads to those dispositions of mind, with which not only that, but all other Prayers are to be offer'd. As this excellent form is the abridgment of all the blessings that creatures can ask, or God bestow, so withal this introduction to it gives the best hope, and most probable means of obtaining them. Let it be remember'd that the near relation to God, which we here profess, promiseth the acceptance of our Prayers in this life, and their reward and accomplishment in the next ; and

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Hallowed be thy Name.

27

is therefore preferable to the empty titles that deluded mortals pursue with greediness, and enjoy with dissatisfaction: in short, that as to call God *Father* is the greatest privilege of a creature, so to do it with faith and suitable reverence is the highest attainment of a Christian.



S E R M O N II.



M A T T. Vi. 9.

Hallowed be thy Name.



OUR Saviour having encourag'd his followers to call *God their Father*, now goes on to direct them in those reasonable desires which may best approve them to be his children. He gives them in this relation to their heavenly Father the best encouragement to ask, and then sets forth

Hallowed be thy Name.

forth the measure and standard of what they must ask for. He more especially strengthens their hope, that they *pray according to God's will*, and that this excellent form contains such desires as are fit for reasonable creatures to offer up, and for a Being of infinite purity to hear.

It would not suit the Majesty of God to shew an indiscreet indulgence to his servants, and to suffer his bounty to be directed by their childish petitions. This undistinguishing fondness would be cruel in its effects, and instead of proving God to be more their Father, would prove him to be less so. Human will would be a dangerous guide to Prayer; and nothing could be more miserable than our selves, if every secret desire were granted without distinction. It is then with great comfort that a Christian can use this form which the Son of God hath taught; when he thus prays, he speaks the words of eternal Wisdom, and *may come more boldly with them to the throne of Grace*, since he is well assur'd that he neither *prays amiss, nor in vain*.

This Prayer consists of two parts; the former of which containing three petitions relates to Christian perfection; the other, to those methods by which that perfection is to be

Hallowed be thy Name.

29

be obtain'd. The one part represents the end, and the other the means of Religion; since the *glory of God's name, the advancement of his kingdom, and the full performance of his will*, are only to be brought about by that pardon of sins, and that supply of our wants, which are ask'd for in the progress of this Prayer. I shall however treat of these three former petitions distinctly, because tho' they all equally mean in consequence the same thing, yet as they are differently exprest, they set our duty in different, and probably more advantageous, lights.

Now in this petition that *God's Name may be hallowed*, two things are to be considered.

First, What it is that we pray for.

Secondly, What those practical uses are that arise from thus praying.

First, I shall consider what we desire in praying that *God's Name may be hallowed*.

The word *holiness* signifies in general a separation of things or persons from common use, and is for that reason in this large sense attributed promiscuously to God and his creatures. The scriptures apply the word without distinction to God and to men. *Thou, O Lord, art holy; who is so great a God as our God? Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.* Pf. lxxvii. 13. Isai. vi. 3.

Hallowed be thy Name.

1 Pet. i.
16.
Heb. xii.
14.

Hos. Be ye holy, for I am holy. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

However holiness is attributed in a very different manner to God; it is in him the essential rectitude of his nature, that is always unchangeably the same; whereas it is in creatures only relative, and is therefore more or less, according to the changeable state of their wills. From this double sense of holiness there ariseth also a double sense of sanctification, which as it is apply'd to men, signifies to purge and cleanse them from the dross of nature, and to give them that purity which they had not before. But when this sanctification is apply'd to God (as it is in this place) it means only to confess and attribute to him that transcendent holiness, which he hath independently of our worship and praises, and to wish that all mankind may be sensible of it. * To hallow or to sanctify God, supposes a thorough sense of his excellencies, and a readiness to express it with becoming respect and reverence.

* Cum dicimus sanctificetur nomen tuum, nos ipsos admonemus desiderare ut nomen ejus quod semper sanctum est, apud homines sanctum habeatur, hoc est non contemnatur; quod non Deo sed hominibus prodest. *Aug. Ep. τὸ γὰρ ἁγιασθήτω ἀντὶ τῆς δοξασθήτω λέγειται. Chrys. Hom. t. 5.*

Hallowed be thy Name.

31

This sanctification is here apply'd to God's name, which according to the *Eastern* style meant the same with his person. Names were among the *Jews* prophetically expressive of the condition and behaviour of those to whom they were given; for this reason, as to praise and glorify any ones name is an expression peculiar to the sacred language, so it means the acknowledgment of that distinguishing character that is express'd by that name. *They shall give thanks to thy name, that is great, wonderful, and holy.* Pf. xlix. 3. Meaning to thee, or thy person. This custom is the more reasonable in relation to God, because little more is known perfectly of that infinite incomprehensible Being but the name; and for this reason the *Jews* call him (יהוה) *the Name*, by way of eminency.

But to proceed, God's Name is ever us'd in Scripture in the singular number, according to that of the Prophet; *The Lord shall be one, and his Name one.* The other words that express power and authority, are not so peculiar to him; but that they may be apply'd to Magistrates and Judges, who are the patterns of his power, tho' not of his existence. But there is one incommunicable Name *Jehovah*, which in the original of it expresseth that eternal and necessary existence, that

Zach. xiv. 9.

Exod. xxi. 6.
xxii. 8, 9.
Pf. lxxxii. 1, 6.

Hallowed be thy Name.

that a true worshipper must suppose in the God that he worships^b; of which he himself said to *Moses*, *this is my Name for ever*; and in the lxxviiith Psalm the *Psalmist* orders them to *praise him by his Name JAH*. So great respect was paid to the word *Jehovah* by the *Jews*, that they were not only cautious of *taking it in vain* (a vice common enough among Christians) but even of expressing it upon solemn occasions. They wrote the word in their books, but reckon'd it next to blasphemy to repeat it; and it was spoke only once in the year by the High-Priest in a solemn benediction. This particular reverence to God's Name was elder ^c than the Gospel, and

^b The word being deriv'd from יהוה or rather היה fuit, signifies that existence belongs truly and properly to God alone. This Name was reveal'd to Moses, Exod. iii. 14. in the words אֲנִי הוּא אֲהִי אשר אהיה which are well render'd by the Greek ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν, I am the Being. It is not improbable that the old reading was יהיה, which appears from Origen's writing it in Greek letters ΠΙΗΙ, from the Heathen word ἰάω, and from the Chaldee word יי, but more especially from this passage of Exodus, from whence it seems to be taken. The likeness of the letters י and ו might easily occasion this change, especially when the word was not pronounc'd for many ages.

^c The reverence of the Jews to the word Jehova is very ancient. Maimonides affirms, that the word was never pronounced but in the Temple, and there only at the solemn benediction; the primitive Fathers call it ὄνομα ἀνεκφώνητον ἀρρήτον, and both Philo and Josephus witness the same thing. But this

Hallowed be thy Name.

33

and is in all probability alluded to by our Saviour in this petition. The *Jews* with whom he liv'd exprest their reverence to God by this respect to his name, and therefore would the more easily understand the expression, and apply this holiness and sanctification to his person.

This petition therefore, desires that every one might pay a just respect to God's Name; and by that to his Person and Authority. We here pray, that an inward reverence may every where accompany an outward respect; and that all his creatures may worship and praise him. We in this petition express a true zeal for God's service, and the most beneficial charity to each other; since the establishment of his worship would bring along with it universal order and peace to men. In short, we pray for two things; that God would, in his due time, *enlighten the dark corners of the earth*; that his ways *may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations*; and that those who already know him, may live answerably to *that knowledge, and adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, in all things*.

is farther plain from the Greek version, which renders it every where *ὅπου*, whereas *ὅπου* is the Greek word for *אשר* but doth not express *יהוה*

D

I come

Hallowed be thy Name.

I come, in the second place, to shew the properest methods of hallowing *God's name*.

The first of these methods is to promote true notions of him.

The best way to sanctify God's name, is to advance the knowledge of his perfections; since the belief of them is the only foundation of all religious worship. This hallowing, likewise, is fitly enough apply'd to his name, because all the zeal and endeavours of worshipping mortals can reach no farther: their service only consists in spreading his glory wider among themselves, so that all that they do for God, is truly done to his name, not his person. Religion commands us to love, to praise and magnify God; and in setting forth his goodness to men, gives the only motives of doing so. He hath been pleased to reveal of himself, all that is necessary to make his servants zealous for his service; but hath revealed no more than is needful to that purpose. Our belief of him is not encumbered with impertinent speculations, but it is both reasonable in its principle, and practical in its end. The Scriptures, which are the measure of divine truth, make not such discoveries of him, as humane reason cannot use, or virtue doth not want. They are all such as do not so much set forth the immense perfections of God in himself;

Hallowed be thy Name.

35

himself; but (what is more easily and more usefully known) his relation to his creatures. All right notions of God are so many practical truths, and there is that connexion between knowledge and practice, that every known perfection of him sets forth the reason of some duty in his servants. His wisdom requires submission to his appointments, his justice obedience to his laws, and his goodness zeal and affection for his interest.

But there is no character of God in which the Scriptures are more full, or which tends more to give us the Will to *hallow God's name*, than the consideration of his extensive *Mercy over all his works*. It would have been in vain to require us to *love him with all our heart*, and *with all our strength*, if the command, and the reason of it, did not go together. And if that love, requir'd by the Gospel, were not founded upon the sense of as much Mercy as creatures could want, or an infinite Being bestow. This love, which is the only principle that can engage us effectually to *hallow his name*, is the consequence of a thorough belief of what he hath revealed of himself. It is an habitual gratitude, formed from frequent reflexion upon the undeserved, and plentiful provision made for us in this world, and the *greater riches of his Mercy*

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through

Hallowed be thy Name.

through Christ. He that esteems God as his friend, and reverences him as his Father (and he that believes the redemption by a Saviour must do both these) will neither be wanting in *hallowing his name* himself, nor in engaging others to do it.

But farther, a thorough belief of all God's Attributes, is necessary to the success of this petition; so that the omission of any one doth in consequence lessen the value of all the rest. Thus suppose all his perfections but Mercy, and his power will appear uncontrollable force, and his Wisdom unfathomable policy; and therefore the belief of either of them will have little influence upon our affections. And again; suppose him great and good, but not just; and he will then appear terrible in his greatness, and contemptible in his goodness: These several Attributes of the divine Nature add a lustre to each other; he is the greater for being good, and his justice sets off his mercy. For this reason, those heresies that either lessen, or misrepresent God, are to be opposed by all those who profess a zeal for his Name. The advocates for truth will, in this respect, approve themselves the best friends to Religion; since the establishment of the one will necessarily promote fit dispositions towards the other.

Such

Hallowed be thy Name.

37

Such are the perfections of God, that he needs but be known to be prais'd and glorify'd; and it is the imperfection of Faith that makes men cold in their zeal, and imperfect in their obedience. So consistent are the Scriptures with themselves, that the knowledge of God, which they set forth, naturally raises all the dispositions of Religion; and as they require no duty without a just motive, so neither any article of Faith without a practical end. The mistakes or defects of belief come from a partiality of judgment, by which men believe as they approve, in opposition to revelation: They, according to their own complexions, form the terms of Religion in the extremes of remissness or severity, and thereby make God *such a one as themselves*.

But as the Scriptures, by the general tenor of them, assure us that God is righteous, just, and merciful; so, withal, the single belief of a redemption by our Saviour includes all these. If we believe that he *was in Christ*, 2 Cor. xv. *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their former trespasses to them*; and that by the terms of this reconciliation, all are sav'd that will repent, and all may come to repentance: This, if frequently and seriously consider'd, will produce the pious dispositions of a Christian.

Hallowed be thy Name.

It is therefore observable, that there is no part of our knowledge relating to God, that is necessary to enflame our affections, that lies not open to the meanest capacity. For as we know him not abstractedly, but by the effects of his providence: This is that knowledge that all may have, and be affected with *from the least to the greatest.*

ⁱⁿ To be short; if we love or admire any thing, it must be from persuading ourselves of that merit in the thing, as to deserve such love and reverence. Our affections are not ready at every short call, and the zeal for God's glory (which is the highest and perfectest of them) is the effect of a thorough and serious belief ⁱⁿ him. He therefore will most effectually *hallow God's name*, who with sincerity calls and believes him his *Father in Heaven*; and he then best suits his practice to this petition, that praises the *Lord for his goodness, and declares the wonders that he doth for the children of men.*

The second method of *hallowing God's name*, consists in paying a due reverence to sacred things.

The majesty of an earthly sovereign, extends farther than his person, and is honour'd in his servants and ambassadors. Now this is
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Hallowed be thy Name.

39

an image of that much greater reverence which all owe to the King of Heaven: Whatever bears his name, or is dedicated to his use, carries a relative holiness along with it, and is, for that reason, entitled to respect. The credit of sacred things ariseth not from their own intrinsic worth, but from their relation to that great master to whose service they are appointed. He must have little respect for the name of his heavenly Father, who thinks not that alone sufficient to stamp any thing, tho' otherwise undeserving, with worth and dignity. God hath requir'd that the reverence which is due to him, should, at least in part, be paid, in the respect to his house, to his sabbath, and to his ministers; *Ye shall* Lev. xix. *keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctu-* 30, *ary, I am the Lord. He that despiseth you,* Luke x. *despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, de-* 16. *spiseth him that sent me.*

We respect not in the persons set apart to God's service, the man, but the office; we are not so much to regard their natural or acquir'd excellencies, as that Saviour whose *ministers they are*; and those saving mysteries of which they are stewards. *We have this* 2 Cor. vi. *treasure, saith the apostle, in earthen vessels,* 7. *that the excellency may be of God.* He being far removed above us, hath left us no other

Hallowed be thy Name.

more satisfactory way of respecting him, than in the dignity of the things solemnly dedicated to his service. He hath made these earthly things *the patterns of things in the Heavens*, and accounts the reverence paid to them, as so much done to his name. He hath appointed these low representations of himself to fix our attention, and hath done so in compassion to humane infirmities.

Few, in this imperfect state, are fit for an abstracted Religion, where all their worship goes no farther than some intervals of serious thinking. Outward gestures and representations, are necessary to strike our minds with reverence and devotion. Religion is calculated for men, as composed of flesh and spirit; and the actions of the body are for that reason requir'd in religious worship, because they tend to promote the devout dispositions of the mind. Though God impos'd outward ceremonies upon the *Jews*, yet he requir'd an inward Religion of them, as well as of the Christian; and St. *Paul* spends the greater part of his epistle to the *Hebrews*, in proving, that the one had a tendency to promote the other.

It is hard to tell which of the two extremes is more fatal; whether the Enthusiasm that reduceth all worship, to some inward acts of the mind; or the Superstition that fixeth a holiness

Hallowed be thy Name.

41

holiness in every little ceremony ; but a good man will endeavour to keep the mean between both ; he will neither place the whole service of a reasonable creature in outward, though significant forms ; nor yet think that in this imperfect state, Religion can subsist without them. The solemnities of religious worship are not only fit expressions of our honour to God's name, but very much promote the inward sense of it. This sacred pomp strikes even devout minds with greater awe and reverence, and will continue a reasonable help of devotion *till we come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

The solemn dedication of times and places, however they may appear of humane institution ; yet these, when rightly us'd, are serviceable to the ends of Religion. Thus men would less frequently, and effectually, think upon God ; if they were left to chuse their own time, than if they were called upon to do it at the return of stated seasons : They would come with more seriousness into his house, when it was so particularly set apart to sacred uses, that every thing there might remind them in whose presence they are : Most certainly they would bring less reverence for God's name into that place that is made the scene

Hallowed be thy Name.

scene of their business, or their pleasure; and would not with so much contrition there, pray for the pardon of sins, where they might expect to commit many more. Thus farther, the solemn gravity with which the Sacraments are administred, would possess the receivers with a greater sense of their fruits, and with more zeal for the great Author of them, than if they were treated as a common meal.

This then is the sanctification of God's name, when every thing that is stamp'd with it is treated with decent respect. He is the only true object of our reverence, and sacred things are so, not from their own worth and dignity, but by virtue of their relation to him. In short; we witness the sincerity of this petition, in advancing, by all reasonable ways, the outward credit of Christianity, and its professors.

The third method of *hallowing God's name*, consists in an exemplary Life.

The honour of our heavenly Father is more especially promoted, in the strict behaviour of those who profess him. All his institutions are design'd to make men more holy, and more spiritual; and the success of those institutions, reflects an honour upon their author.

John xv.
8.

In this, saith our Saviour, is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, and are become my disciples. When

Hallowed be thy Name.

43

When Religion produces the fruit of a good life, it is an additional argument that it is the appointment of that wisdom that suits the means to the end. The virtue of a Christian is not confin'd within a narrow sphere, but tends to set forth the praises of him *who hath call'd him out of darkness into his marvellous light*. Every good action in him witnesses to the world, the perfection of that Gospel that taught such performances, and the sufficiency of that Grace that enables him to work them. His shining practice is an ornament to his profession, and whilst he hath the comfort of a good conscience, his heavenly Father, whose name he professes, will have the praise of it. Religion will have the honour, and his neighbour the instruction and encouragement of his example, and in both these ends God's name will be more especially glorify'd. *His light thus shining before men,* Matt. v. 16. *they will see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven.*

Our praises of God, when not supported by an uniform obedience, are both unacceptable to him, and unserviceable to ourselves. A wicked life is the greatest blasphemy upon that holy name by which we are call'd, and however we may confess it with our tongues, yet we more effectually *deny* and defame it

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Rom. ii.
24.

by our works. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you. But an unblameable conduct answers the objections of unbelievers, and puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men. The very scorers, who would not acknowledge the certainty of Religion in its evidence, will be oblig'd from the frequency of such examples, to admire the power of it in its fruits, and thereby be brought one step nearer to the kingdom of God.

1 Pet. ii.
12.

For this reason the gospel lays down a rule of practice before unknown, commanding to provide things honest in the sight of all men; which rule, when observ'd, more especially tends to glorify God's name. The Christian is not only to approve his conscience to the searcher of hearts, but even to justify his outward behaviour to men; hereupon St. Peter directs to have a conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they by seeing your good works, may glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore he advises them to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: And St. Paul, in setting forth the relative duties, ever gives this reason for their observance, that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphem'd: By which he shews, that the omissions of du-

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ty in any relation, either of a subject, a son, or a servant; were so many reproaches *upon that holy name by which they are called.*

It is observable, that the practice of Christian duties, as such, more especially promotes the glory of God. The moral duties, as taught by nature, such as justice, temperance, chastity, &c. are strengthen'd by present conveniences; and a wise man, in the account of the world, seems in some measure to serve himself by the observance of them: But the Gospel duties, such as *doing good for evil, forgiveness of enemies, the denial of our selves; &c.* having no encouragement either from natural inclination, or present interest, must shine with greater ornament to our profession, and the master of it. The appearance of so much perfect virtue will naturally strike all the witnesses of it with great reverence for a doctrine, the fruits of which are so eminent.

A mind (such as the Christian's is describ'd) above the hopes and fears of the world, that can *possess itself in tribulations with patience*, and in pleasures and affluence with self-denial, shews the power of Religion to great advantage. The examples that are most for God's glory, are such as have been on the side of unrewarded virtue, or undeserved suffering. For this reason St. Paul advises the *Philippians*

Phil. i. 11.

1 Pet. iv.
20.

lippians to be full of the fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ, to the glory of God. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ (saith St. Peter) happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

God's Will only can be thought the motive, and his Spirit the promoter of so perfect obedience, and therefore his name will be more especially glorify'd in it. By these weapons the Apostles fought the good fight of faith, and propagated the Gospel as much by the conviction of their lives, as by *that demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.*

These are the several methods of *hallowing God's name*, all which we are supposed to promise in sending up this petition. We cannot hallow God's name without promoting the knowledge of him, and thereby promise the encouragement of true Religion: Nor, secondly, can we be consistent with ourselves in honouring him without paying some respect to whatever hath a relation to him; and therein, therefore, promise a reverence to sacred things. Nor, lastly, can we do this without an orderly behaviour, and thereby oblige ourselves, as we name the *name of Christ, to depart from all Iniquity.*

I now

Hallowed be thy Name.

47

I now proceed to the practical uses that arise from thus praying.

First, We may hence learn in what order to place our desires.

Our Saviour by teaching us in the first place to pray, that our heavenly Father's name *may be hallowed*, shews, that the regard to his Glory should have the first place in our minds. He suffers us not to set our little wants in the front of our Prayers, but exemplifies that rule of his own, in *seeking first* Matt. vi. *the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, ^{33.} and in the next place to expect that *all these things shall be added*. ^d *St. Chrysostom* here observes how fit this Prayer is for a Christian, because it desires nothing before the sanctification of God's name, and thereby gives that the preference above all our own private wishes.

That gratitude that naturally ariseth from believing God our Father in so many instances of mercy, must give us an affectionate zeal for his name. Every good thing we enjoy or hope for, is a testimony of his bounty, and therefore must remind us of that affection, which we owe both for the possession and the

^d Ἀξία τῷ τῷ Θεῷ πατέρα καλεῖν ἢ δὲ μὴδὲν αἰτεῖν πρὸς τὸ πατρὸς δόξης, ἀλλὰ πάντα δούτερα ἡγεῖσθαι τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν ἀφημίας. Chrysost. in locum.

expec-

Hallowed be thy Name.

expectation. A just man will be grateful to so eminent a benefactor; and he hath no other way of expressing this his gratitude to God, but by wishing that his name may be honour'd, and his interest promoted. So generous wishes as these are the only returns that can be made to an infinite Being, and as more than this cannot be paid, so less than this will not be accepted.

This is no more than that grateful justice, which every good man is ready to shew those who have oblig'd him. We reckon that a narrow mind that is so confin'd to itself as not to receive some pleasure from the satisfaction of those that are nearly allied to him. An honest man will make the interest of his benefactor his own, and will be earnest for that success in which he hath no share, but what his friendship and good nature give him.

This generous justice therefore, that we shew to a common friend, should be withal practis'd to that more deserving and important one, our heavenly Father; and we should act upon as good a principle in Religion, as we do in common life. If small favours (and such are all the favours of mortals) call for so disinterested inclination, as to make us sharers in their joys and their griefs,

Hallowed be thy Name.

49

their fame and their reproaches; how much more is this inclination due to God, who gives us both this friendship of our fellow creatures and every thing else besides? Hereupon *David* proves it as an instance of his sincerity (and it is most certainly the best that can be given) that he made God's Glory the measure of his affections: *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee; and am not I grieved at those that rise up against thee?* Ps. cxxxix.
21.

The love of God so exprest is that disposition that Religion designs for its end, and is well qualify'd to effect. This generous affection of mind for God's service; is not an extravagant notion, above the capacity or the duty of Christians, but ariseth from a thorough sense of the redemption. The greatest heights of Religion are founded in gratitude; and that gratitude is the necessary consequence of sincerely believing the Christian faith; we need only seriously to reflect upon the mercies in Christ *Jesus*, to be mov'd with this warmth of affection; and if we, with a true meaning, call God our Father, we shall wish in the next place that *his name may be hallowed*.

In short, this petition more especially sets forth the duty, and speaks the language of
E a Chri

50 *Hallowed be thy Name.*

a Christian; and by its ardent wishes for God's Glory, very much recommends those other following petitions that we send up for ourselves.

The second practical use that may be drawn from this petition, is, that the success of it tends to our own advantage.

All the several methods of hallowing God's Name promote the virtue, and by that the happiness of mankind. If they honour him by this first and necessary method of advancing the knowledge of him, they thereby become better acquainted with the evidence and extent of their hope, and improve their joy and their faith together. If they go on to honour him by a respect to sacred things, they grow by every expression of this respect into an habitual devotion; which as it is the beginning of the next life's perfection, so it is the best pledge of its enjoyment. If, lastly, they promote God's Glory by a regular behaviour, they have here also *their reward*; every step they take in holiness is in the road to life eternal, and they by low and undeserving performances purchase a cheap admission into the *joy of their Lord*.

The question in *Job* appears from hence very reasonable; *Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise is profitable to himself?*

Job xxii.
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Hallowed be thy Name.

51

self? Is it a favour to the Almighty that thou art righteous, and is there any profit to him that thou makest thy way perfect? Our Saviour for this reason teacheth us, after we have done all, to think ourselves unprofitable servants, since all our service of God only terminates in ourselves.

The homage of worshippers adds no more to the divine Majesty, than so many beholders to the Sun. They themselves enjoy that incense of worship which they send up, and should be thankful for the opportunities of doing so. God wants not this low fruitless tribute of service, but he demands it to bring us the nearer to himself. All the manifestations of his Glory are merciful, and his creatures are the better for them, in being thereby both more enabled and encourag'd to purchase happiness by serving him. For this reason in the office after the Communion, which is the antientest and indeed the sublimest part of any extant Liturgy, *we give thanks to God for his great Glory*, confessing by this that all the manifestations of it are so many blessings to mankind.

In short, the sanctification of God's name is not only by positive institution the condition of eternal happiness, but is withal a natural and proper means to improve us in

Hallowed be thy Name.

spiritual perfection ; and therefore whensoever we pray, that God's name *may be hallow'd*, we must think it is as true an expression of concern for ourselves, as of duty to our heavenly Father.

Thirdly, and lastly, This petition obliges us to avoid all occasions of giving offence.

If our hearts go with our tongues in this Prayer, we profess herein that caution in our behaviour, that the *name of God and his doctrine be not blasphem'd*. This profession of *hallowing God's Name* abridgeth those who use it, not only of all criminal, but even indecent liberties, and obligeth them to suit their whole behaviour to the credit of Religion.

There is something more than a bare moral conduct requir'd of the disciples of Christ *Jesus*, who are commanded to *shine as lights in a crooked and perverse generation*. The honour of that Master whose name a Christian here obliges himself to sanctify, is reproach'd in every open or even suspected irregularity ; and he is not true to his duty in this point, who, tho' innocent, yet takes not care to avoid (as far as he may) the suspicions of guilt. He must, for the sake of his most holy profession, justify his example to the world, and for that reason must not only abstain *from*
evil,

Hallowed be thy Name.

53

evil, but from all the appearances of it. Not only flagrant vices, but even indiscreet liberties become sinful, when they offend the weak, or harden the obstinate. The mispent worldliness of one, the ill tim'd gayety of another, and the criminal connivance at the *works or workers of darkness* in most, by the mistaken example of them, may do harm to Religion, and may become more criminal in the effects of them than they were in their design. We may be parties to such mistakes as we never design'd, and may seduce others to leap down the precipice, by coming too near the brink of it ourselves.

The lazy, the indolent, and the voluptuous, seem to themselves to be between the extremes of guilt and innocence; but their example is on the opposite side to Christianity, and will therefore be an article of their future condemnation. They do no service to their holy profession; and whilst they by their works honour not God's name, they do in effect reproach it. They strengthen the *bands of wickedness* by not endeavouring to *loose them*, according to that rule of our Saviour, whereby *he that gathereth not with him, scattereth abroad*.

But the true Christian must exceed these in his conduct, if he hopes to do so in his re-

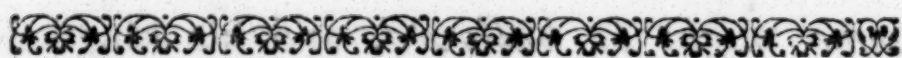
ward; and must resolve not only to do no harm, but even to do some good. His regard to this petition obliges him to shew the power of religion by its fruits, and to endeavour to rob publick immorality of that custom and prescription which keep it in countenance. In short, if he desires with sincerity that God's name *may be hallow'd* (and he is not a Christian that desires it not in some degree) he will make God's Will the rule, and his Glory the end of his actions; his active example will speak out God's honour in more intelligible language than all the other more fruitless tributes of praise and thanksgiving; his *good works* thus conducted by himself, and thus *shining out before men*, will be the best means of *glorifying his Father in heaven*.



S E R M O N



S E R M O N I I I .



M A T T. VI. IO.

Thy Kingdom come.



HIS petition hath been thought by some to be only an illustration or repetition of the foregoing: but it is certain that each of these articles hath a distinct sense; the former wishes for the sanctification of God's name; and the latter limits that wish to the methods of Christianity: in the one we pray that he may be glorify'd; in the other, that he may be so in the way our Lord *Jesus* hath taught. We pray herein for the welfare of that community, of which we as Christians are members, and for that *Glory to God in the highest*, which was foretold to be the consequence of the Gospel.

Thy Kingdom come.

The words of both these petitions are found in the *Jewish Prayers*; which appearing from their dialect to be very antient, it is not improbable that our Saviour alluded to them in this place. The daily wish of God's people of old was, that he would give *deliverance and redemption to Israel*; and they ever exprest that wish in desiring, ^a that *his name might be hallow'd*, and his kingdom establish'd. They apply'd these blessings to the coming of the *Messiah*; and thereby appear not only to have us'd the same language, but to have meant the same thing with Christians: only with this difference, that what they wish'd for in the first coming of the *Messiah*, is by us with a more certain expectation desir'd in the second, *when he shall appear without sin unto salvation*.

^a *The very words themselves are in the old Jewish Liturgies, and the additions that are made to them explain their sense.* יתגדל ויתקדש שמוה רבנא דבעלמא דברא כרעותיה רמלך מהכותיה ויצמח פורקניה ויקרב משיחיה ויפדוק עמו בהיכוד ובחידיון רכמ בית ישראל בעגלא ובזמן קריב. *Maim. Seder. Tehil.* May God's great name be magnify'd and sanctify'd; may he establish his kingdom, and set forth his redemption, and hasten his *Messiah*, and save his people in your days and the days of the house of *Israel*, hastily and speedily. *These words are a part of the solemn benediction, and by the Chaldee termination of them appear to be much older than our Saviour.*

I shall

Thy Kingdom come.

57

I shall in the following discourse endeavour to explain what is meant by desiring, that God's *Kingdom may come*; and then point out those practical uses which arise from thence.

Now in explaining the words, two things are to be consider'd.

First, The nature of that *Kingdom* for which we now pray. And,

Secondly, In what sense that *Kingdom* may be said to come.

First, I must consider the nature of this *Kingdom*.

Some have explain'd the Kingdom of God in a spiritual and mystical sense, as if we here only pray'd for that change of affection in ourselves, whereby God might be said to *reign in our hearts*. They would take it for no more than the obedience of the inward man; according to those words in St. Luke, the *Kingdom of God is within you*. Ch. xvii. But most certainly this Kingdom, by the whole ^{21.} tenor of Scriptures, signifies an external and visible state of things, under the conduct of the Gospel. The antient Prophecies call the government of the world under our Lord *Jesus* by that name ^b; and as that notion did then

^b Ps. lxxii. 1. Isai. ix. 5, 32. Dan. ii. 44. Zach. ix. 9.

dispose

dispose men to a more zealous expectation of the *Messiah*,—so doth it still fitly enough represent the state of things under him.

The natural bounds of God's Kingdom contain the whole compass of created nature, *the Heaven being his throne, and the earth his footstool*. But the spiritual part of it, his Church, is much narrower in its extent, and *his flock* is represented by himself *as a little one*. As by the fall and the universal depravation that follow'd, men had withdrawn their obedience from their Maker, and of creatures and subjects were become rebels; God could not be said to be King of those who disown'd his authority, and adher'd to another sovereign. They were for many ages sold unto sin, and *worship'd and serv'd the creature more than the Creator*.

Rom. i.
25.

The redemption then by our Lord *Jesus* being the only method to reclaim mankind, and to re-establish God's authority over them; the state of things under the influence of this redemption is with propriety enough call'd a *Kingdom*. By being Christians *we that were afar off are brought to be near, and are reconcil'd to God*. We are rescu'd from that rival of Heaven and adversary of mankind the devil, being *brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan*

Acts xxvi.
18.

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Thy Kingdom come.

59

to God. We profess a stricter obedience to his will, and by virtue of that profession are made subjects of this spiritual Kingdom. The Gospel dispensation is fitly call'd God's Kingdom, because the prevalence of it puts an end to the long and fatal rebellion of mankind, against their Lord and Governor. It sets forth a new covenant of peace; that hath virtue for its condition, and eternal life for its reward; and as it demands a more perfect obedience than formerly, so it doth so upon better promises.

But that this expression of *Kingdom* means the Gospel dispensation, is evident from all those passages of the New Testament where it is mention'd. As when it is said the *King-* Matt. xxi. 43.
dom of God shall be taken from you, and
given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; as also when it is compar'd to a xii.
field of wheat and tares, to a grain of
mustard-seed, to a treasure, &c. Thus again;
Among them that are born of women there xi. 11.
hath not risen a greater than John Baptist;
but he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven
is greater than he: where the state of things under the Law is compar'd to that under the Gospel, and for this reason the preaching of our Saviour is call'd *the Gospel of the Kingdom.*

Thy Kingdom come.

But this notion of a *Kingdom*, as it undoubtedly signifies the Church of Christ, so doth it withal lead us into the several conditions and circumstances of it. This one *Kingdom* (for it is always us'd in the singular number) shews that there is but one Church, howsoever distress'd and wheresoever dispers'd through the world. It reminds us that we have but *one God, one faith, and one baptism*; and that the several parts of it, however distant in interests, judgment, or affection, yet *are but many members of one body*.

But as we hence learn the unity, so likewise the order and government of the Christian Church. An earthly Kingdom supposes governors and governed; and the spiritual one supposes the same kind of subordination. The distinction of Clergy and Laity is the same in the Church, that governors and subjects are in the State; and the acknowledgment of the one is as necessary to the ends of spiritual society, as the other is to establish external peace and order in the world. There is requir'd in this community, as indeed in all others, due subjection to the *head*, and fellowship with the *members*. We, as Christians, are members of a Kingdom, the rewards and privileges of which are only to be obtain'd by being united to it: and a mere
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Thy Kingdom come.

61

moral man, wilfully separated from the visible Communion of the Church, is no more a true disciple of our Lord, than a useless recluse or hermit is a good subject.

It is farther observable, that this *Kingdom* is attributed promiscuously to God, and to our Lord *Jesus* Christ. Our Saviour Christ calls it sometimes the *Kingdom* of God, sometimes my *Kingdom*; and in the writings of the Apostles it is call'd the *Kingdom of Christ*, 2Pet i. 11. and *the Kingdom of his dear Son*. Col. i. 13. This common way of attributing the same things to God and our Lord *Jesus* shews, by the way, the great unity of the Godhead; and as it from hence appears that all *things that the Father bath are the Son's*, John xvi. 15. so withal too that *he and his Father are one*.

This *Kingdom* then signifies the visible Christian Church, and by howsoever different appellations it is call'd, it only means the same thing in different lights. As it is call'd the *Kingdom of God*, it sets forth those more perfect methods of obedience to his will which we are taught by the Gospel. As it is call'd the *Kingdom of Christ*, it represents the immediate founder and governor of it, our Lord *Jesus*. And lastly, as it is call'd the *Kingdom of Heaven*, it signifies that merciful dispensation which will carry us thither, which must now
+ improve

Thy Kingdom come.

improve us in Grace, and hereafter consummate us in Glory.

I must now in the second place shew, in what sense this *Kingdom* for which we pray may be said to come.

Matt. x.
7.

Now to understand this we must observe the several views under which it is represented in Scripture. St. *John* preaches that the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. And the same words are us'd by the Apostles sent out by our Saviour. It is said in another place to be already *come*, or as the *Greek* may be better render'd, *now coming*. Notwithstanding this

Luke xi.
20.

approach of it, our Saviour talks of it as something at a great distance, and that was not to happen till after great conflicts, and therefore makes it the subject of our prayers to the end of the world, that *this Kingdom may come*. The Prophet *Daniel* seems to place this *Kingdom* at the greatest distance, by fixing it after the destruction of the fourth Empire: *in the days of those Kings shall the God of Heaven, set up a Kingdom that shall never be destroy'd; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*.

Dan. ii.
44.

These passages may be easily reconcil'd by observing that this *Kingdom* was begun in

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Thy Kingdom come.

63

John Baptist's preaching, and continued to grow by that of our Saviour and the Apostles. But then as it is not yet come to that wideness in its extent, and that purity in its members that the divine wisdom design'd, and our Saviour's sufferings deserv'd; we therefore here pray that God would in his due time hasten these blessings. Those circumstances which are necessary to make a government perfect, have hitherto been more or less wanting in the Christian Church. Thus if a Kingdom be abridg'd of its due extent, or if it be disturb'd in its inward peace and quiet, by the disobedience of its members; or if, lastly, by its distress'd condition it be unable to reward the obedience of deserving subjects; in all or any of these cases, that Kingdom is not so perfect as it should be. A good subject would readily employ both his wishes and endeavours to supply these several defects in that government under which he lives; and a good Christian by his daily Prayers wishes the same to this *Kingdom* of God. That we may therefore know what we pray for, in desiring God's *Kingdom* to come, I shall shew in what senses it may be said not yet to *have come*.

First, The *Kingdom* of God is not yet fully come from the narrow extent of Christianity.

It

Mat. xxiv.
14.

1 Cor. iv.
4.

It is certain that the knowledge of the true God and his Son *Jesus* Christ hath never yet extended so far as hath been foretold by the antient Prophecies. Tho' our Saviour himself declar'd, that the *Gospel should be preach'd to all the world*, yet it hath hitherto been confin'd to a small part of it. The extent of his *Kingdom* is pathetically describ'd in the lxxii^d *Psalms*, that he shall reign from the one sea to the other, and from the river to the world's end; all Kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall do him service. But very little of this hath been hitherto accomplish'd in the Christian Church; and the state of it hath as yet bore no proportion to the extent of God's promises, or the designs of his mercy. The influence of the gospel hath but as yet chear'd a few, in comparison of those far greater numbers in which the God of this world hath so blinded their eyes, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ might not shine upon them. If we look over the vast extent of the *Turkish, Tartarian and Indian* Empires, all whose governments are either Heathenish or Mahometan, it cannot be said with the truth of the letter, that God hath given his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. The limits of Christianity do

do not extend to one sixth of the known world; and tho' in some parts of *Asia* the knowledge of Christ hath been establish'd, and afterwards extinguish'd by the hidden disposal of Providence, yet in a great part of those countries the sufficient means of that knowledge hath been hitherto wanting.

Are then these excellent things spoken of the city of God to no purpose? Is the greater part of the world to continue till its dissolution in the same rebellious corrupt state? Are things still to remain as they were from the beginning, and the whole scene to be shut up with no more visible fruits of Christ's redemption? But yet this uncertainty of the Promises, this low scheme of Christianity, this narrowness or disappointment of God's mercy are the consequence of believing that this Kingdom will be no larger than it now is, or hath been. If we are persuaded (and that we have the utmost reason to be) that God can be neither delusive in his promises, nor partial in his compassion, we must expect that restitution of all things that was spoken of by the Prophets.

But there is one particular which portends the greater extent of the Christian Church, and in which the Prophecies are very express; and that is the calling of God's old peculiar
F people

Thy Kingdom come.

Hof. iii. 4.

people the Jews. The children of Israel shall be many days without a king, and without a prince and without a sacrifice, and without an ^c image; (which could not be true till the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus;) afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

Zach. xii.

10.
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The Prophet Zachary foretels, that the whole people shall hereafter bewail their sins in crucifying our Lord Jesus: *I will power upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*

Rom. xi.

25.

Hereupon St. Paul spends the whole xith chapter of his Epistle to the Romans upon this subject, who for the persecutions from the Jews at that time were very much inflam'd against them. *I would not have your ignorant of this mystery,*

^c The present reading, without an Image, tho' follow'd by all the modern versions, is very faulty; for the Jews were ever forbid the use of Images. The present Hebrew copies are therefore corrupted in the word מצבה, for the old reading was מזבח altare, as appears both from the Greek ἄλτάρη θυσιαστήριον, and from the vulgar fine altari: read therefore, without an altar.

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Thy Kingdom come.

67

that hardness hath happen'd in part to Israel, till the fullness of the Gentiles shall come, and then all Israel shall be sav'd; as it is written; There shall come a deliverer out of Sion, and turn away iniquity from Jacob.

Now it is certain, that except the few that were brought to Christianity during our Saviour's time, and a few years after, the whole body of the Christians hath been taken out of the Heathen Nations, that were not in the Covenant. There hath never been in any age of the Church such a remarkable conversion of *Jews* to the Gospel, as to justify the truth of those ancient Predictions. They have hitherto, by a wonderful Providence, in all the confusion of Nations, and severe oppressions of Civil Power, been preserv'd from being destroy'd, or even mix'd and melted down. They have retain'd their name, their faith, and their language, while they have seen the Nations around them change them all; and they remain to this day as in their oppress'd condition, a mark of God's Justice, so in their hope a pledge of his Promises. It is therefore observable, that as all the promises of truth, peace, and unity, are made by the prophets to the *Jewish* people, so we may from hence conclude that the Christian

F 2

Thy Kingdom come.

stian Church will not come to perfection in these blessings, till the *Jews* are made members of it; undoubtedly their conversion will produce a better scene of things, and bring the Christians, to whom they are joyn'd, into *the old and right paths*. They must necessarily come in upon such conviction, as to profess the Gospel with more faithfulness to truth, and more zeal for the author of it, than probably any body of Christians now in being; and as they will be free from the little prejudices and disputes with which particular Churches now labour, will be more able both to restore what hath been lost by negligence, and to remove what hath been added by superstition. Christianity will by their means become both more reasonable in its principle, and more powerful in its effects, and thereby be better fitted to be preach'd to those Nations who have not yet receiv'd it.

Zach. viii.
23.

In those days, saith the Prophet, ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you. And many

Isai. ii. 3.

people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; for out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the

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Thy Kingdom come.

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the Lord from Jerusalem. The peace and unity that must then flourish, will both convince and charm the unconverted Heathen, and be a means *that all may come to the knowledge of the truth: for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the World,* Rom. xi. 15. *what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?*

In short, God's Kingdom cannot be said to come till it hath been submitted to by the *Jews*, and preached to all the World besides; and therefore we are suppos'd to desire both these in this petition.

Secondly, This Kingdom is not yet come from the want of due obedience in the members.

A Government cannot be said to be perfect, where the laws and constitutions of it have not their due force; and this hath been generally the case of our Saviour's Kingdom. Our faith shone with the greatest lustre at its first rising, but (as tho' the Historians maxim were true, *res unius ætatis erant*;) it is obvious to observe a gradual decline of it from the age of our Saviour and the Apostles. *All that generation were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor the works which he had done for Israel.* Judg. ii. 7;

Thy Kingdom come.

We are not to measure the success of Christianity so much by the extent of Country through which it hath prevail'd, as by the general influence it hath had upon the lives of its professors. In this respect it hath been a very narrow Province, nor hath it produc'd that *Glory to God in the highest, or Peace on Earth*, which it design'd. The publick maxims of the world are now as unchristian as they were before the Gospel was preach'd; there hath been the same unreasonable strife about little things, and the same wicked prosecution of that strife as ever. The peaceable and forgiving complexion of our Lord hath not been observ'd by those who call themselves his disciples; nor hath it so soften'd and disarm'd their dispositions, as to make them, according to the Prophet, *beat their Swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks*. If we should take a general view of Christianity, as it is oppress'd by its enemies, and neglected by its friends, and corrupted both in its manners and discipline, it represents very little in its outward appearance, and much less in the fruits of it, the Kingdom of our Saviour. In some Countries it is superstition without charity, in others it is zeal without knowledge; in some, Morality is set up against Faith, and in others there

Isai. ii. 4.

Thy Kingdom come.

71

there is the form without the power of Godliness: in many places the sanctuary is either uncharitably shut up, or negligently laid waste; and almost every where it lends a holy name to various opinions, according to the complexion or convenience of the several Governments that profess it.

But the general conduct of private life gives no better view of this matter. A Christian, as such, is by his profession a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven; but what is there like this in the general behaviour of those that call themselves so? What doth the universal conduct of these offer, but anxious unbelieving cares for worldly things, which are therefore so many defections from our Saviour's Kingdom, which he hath declar'd *not to be of this World*? We, by serving impure and worldly affections, withdraw our allegiance from our Sovereign, who hath forbid them; and that service that is only due to our Lord *Jesus*, is by them transferr'd to Mammon.

But farther, the universal practice of hatred and revenge, are contrary to this spiritual Kingdom. The open violence of one subject against another, is reckon'd as a war upon their common Sovereign, and therefore in the construction of the law He is accounted the

Thy Kingdom come.

injur'd party. The same reason holds by the Gospel: every act of revenge is a breach of our Saviour's Government, being committed against those, whom he hath redeemed by his Sufferings, and protected by his Laws.

This Kingdom therefore which we pray to come, cannot be said to do so, till the power and efficacy of it be more visible in the orderly lives of its subjects, and *God's name be glorify'd and his Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* We desire by this petition, that all who call themselves Christians may hold the faith in the *bond of peace and in righteousness of life*, and may neither be wanting in obedience to their Lord, nor in affection to their fellow subjects. In short, we more especially pray here for that only method of more perfect Righteousness, a more plentiful effusion of God's Spirit^d, which is promis'd in the latter days, and hath never yet been thoroughly accomplish'd.

^d The ancient copies of St. Luke instead of ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, read, in Gregory Nyssen's time, ἐπιδημησάτω τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα σου from which promiscuous reading he observes, that the Kingdom of God and the descent of the Holy Spirit meant the same thing: ἡ καθὼς ἡμῖν ὑπὸ τῆς λακᾶ τὸ αὐτὸ νόημα σαφές ἐστιν ἐξηγήσεται· ὁ δὲ τὴν βασιλείαν ἐλθεῖν ἀξιών τῆς αἰγίας πνεύματος· συμμαχίαν ἐπιβοᾷται· ὅπως γὰρ ἐν ἐκείνῳ εὐαγγελίῳ φασιν, ἀντὶ τῆς ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, ἐλθέτω τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ καθαρίσάτω ἡμᾶς. Greg. Nyssen. de Oratione.

Thy Kingdom come.

73

The holy Spirit is at all times the principle of that faith we profess, and that virtue we perform; but yet some circumstances of time may require a greater measure of it than others. The antient Prophecies have foretold, that a greater portion of the Spirit will be pour'd out in the *last days*; and it is observable that the expression of *latter days*, doth not signify the general state of Christianity, but the latter ages of it^c. This promise of the Spirit in the Prophets is generally joyn'd to the recalling of the *Jews*, and therefore belongs not to the Church till they are made a part of it. Thus *Ezekiel* joyns them together; *I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries. A new heart will I also give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* In like manner the Prophet *Jeremiah* foretels at the same time the inward peace and outward prosperity of *Israel*; *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* It is therefore to

Ezek. xi.

Jer. xxxi.

33.

^c 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. James v. iii. 1 Pet. i. 5.
2 Pet. iii. 3. 1 John ii. 18. Jude x. 18.

bc

be observ'd, that though several of these promises are apply'd by the Apostles to the first effusion of the Spirit, yet the words are only so apply'd by way of accommodation; whereas the context from whence they are taken manifestly determines them to some future age of the Church, which we have not yet seen. Undoubtedly God accommodates his Grace to our necessities, and therefore gives a less portion of it at present, because we are not fit for more. But in the great defection from Christianity, which is expected in the latter ages of the Church, and is already probably begun, the few that remain will want a greater measure of assistance for their support. ^f As the *persecution* that is to begin upon this falling away *will be such as hath not been from the beginning of the World*, the efficacy of God's Spirit will be both more necessary and more visible in those who go through it.

Matt.
xxiv. 21.

^f *The apprehension of this persecution was so great in the ancient Church, that their daily Prayer was, pro statu seculi, & pro morâ finis. Which Tertullian observes to contradict the sense of this petition: Itaque si ad Dei voluntatem & ad nostram suspensionem pertinet regni Dominici repræsentatio, quomodo quidam protractum quendam seculo postulant? Cùm regnum Dei, quod ut adveniat oramus, ad consummationem seculi tendat; optamus maturius regnare & non diutius servire. Lib. de Oratione.*

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Thy Kingdom come.

75

The Church thus exercis'd by conflicts, and thus supported by God's Spirit, will be purg'd of all her dross, and more resemble our Saviour's Kingdom. The separation of half-Christians will make it more pure and perfect in its remaining members, and shall then fulfil the prediction of the new *Jerusalem*: *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, but they which are written in the book of life.* The *Jews* therefore have a tradition, that the world, at the coming of the *Messiah*, will be compos'd of the two distant extremes of very good and very bad men; the one part being ripe for his vengeance, and the other for his mercy. What they observe of his first coming seems to be most true of his second, that the Church being refin'd and purify'd by the disappointed malice of its enemies, will be fitter to meet its Lord, *when he cometh with his holy Angels to render to every man according to his works.*

Rev. xxi.

Ephes. v.
24, 26, 32.

Thirdly, The Kingdom of God cannot be said to come, till the true members of it receive their reward.

A Kingdom cannot be said to be perfect, when the subjects of it are under hardships and oppression; and yet this is the ordinary condition of the true members of Christ's Church.

Thy Kingdom come.

Church. His Kingdom cannot be said to be accomplish'd, till his faithful servants are made sharers in it, and they that have already *suffer'd with him*, be admitted to *reign with him*. The expectation of this is very foreign to the state of things in this World, wherein God's enemies have generally as large a portion as his friends, and we can know neither *love nor hatred by any thing before us*. The tares and the wheat grow in one field, and tho' different in merit, will be the same in condition *till the Son of Man cometh with his holy Angels*, and shall separate one from the other.

The disciples of our Saviour, during their stay in this World, pursue happiness through the rough and narrow path, and with great labour and conflicts are to strive for the *mark and reward of the high calling in Christ Jesus*. They are professors of a suffering, self-denying Doctrine; and their unseasonable and unfashionable practice of Religion doth in fact prove them to be so. If they *oppose wickedness in high places*, if they *reprove in season and out of season*, if they *have no fellowship either with the works or workers of darkness*, they must expect the same treatment with the *Captain of their salvation*, and like him *must be made perfect through sufferings*. But

Thy Kingdom come.

77

But if the state of things were more favourable to Christians, and they were as much encourag'd as they are generally oppress'd, yet this would fall very short of that Kingdom that is promis'd them. Their virtue cannot have a sufficient reward in this World, when their greatest merit is to expect none in it; and the pleasures of all kinds here must be a lean recompence to those who can receive no satisfaction from them, but profess to have *crucify'd the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

Besides, not only those who are still here, have not yet their reward, but even those, who are already departed hence in the faith of Christ, have no other enjoyment than what ariseth from the full assurance of Hope. They are not to receive their final consummation in bliss till the great day of account; and *the souls under the altar are order'd to* Rev. vi. 11. *rest yet a little while, till their fellow servants and brethren, that are to be slain as they, be accomplish'd.* They who are said to have been slain for the *Word of God*, and the *Testimony they bore* (and sure none can have a better title to the present possession of Happiness than they) are not, without us, *to be made perfect*; and those who are call'd at the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hour, vi. 9.
3 are

are yet to receive their wages at once. The intermediate time till the day of Judgment is to the Saints on Earth the state of tryal, and to those above the state of hope; and the communion between them (which we profess by our Creed) obliges them to extend their wishes to each other; so that as they charitably pray for our perseverance, we likewise pray for their consummation.

The completion of this Kingdom therefore is not to be till the second coming of our Saviour with Power and great Glory: for which reason he is said to *come then in his Kingdom*; and this very Judgment is call'd by *St. Luke the Kingdom of God*. It is worthy of observation, that *St. Matthew*, in the description of this Kingdom, calls him frequently *the King*, which he doth not in any other place; and the reward that is there bestow'd upon his faithful servants, is call'd *the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the World*.

As the *Jews* then do particularly apply this petition to the coming of the *Messiah*, so do we Christians; but then we mean that coming, in which he *shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation*: we pray herein first for the finishing, and then for the reward of our labours; and according to the words

Luke ix.
27.

Matt. xxv.

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Thy Kingdom come.

79

words of our Burying office, that God would in his due time *accomplish his Elect, and hasten his Kingdom.*

These then are the several senses in which God's Kingdom is not yet come, and for which our Saviour here teaches us to pray. We pray that both *Jew* and *Gentile* may come to the knowledge of the truth; and that after they have so known Christ, they may confess him by (the most unexceptionable testimony) the holiness of their lives: and then in the last place, that those who have so known and practis'd, may speedily be put in possession of the rewards that the Lord *the righteous Judge will give to all those that love his appearance.* In short, by praying that God's Kingdom may come, we wish for the increase, the unity and perseverance of his Church on Earth, and the final completion and triumphs of it in Heaven.

I come in the third place to shew the practical uses that arise from this Prayer.

First, From praying that God's Kingdom may come, we may assuredly expect that in due time it certainly will come.

Our own wishes are far from being the standard of truth, and we may, when directed by our own fallible judgments, desire many things, that are both unnecessary and uncertain.

Thy Kingdom come.

uncertain. But as Christ, the eternal Word, hath taught us to pray for this Kingdom, he hath in doing so (tho' there were no other proofs of it) given us a tolerable assurance that it will come. The Saviour of the World, cannot be suppos'd to delude his followers with fruitless and chimerical wishes, but all the desires, to which he directs them, must be both reasonable in their principle, and encouraging in their expectation. The hope, that the Church hereafter will be larger in its extent, and more perfect in its constitution, and thereby more resembling our Saviour's Kingdom, is both agreeable to Truth and serviceable to Religion. How little will it appear to have deserv'd the care of God, and to have justify'd the sufferings of his Son, if *all things are to continue as they were from the beginning of the World*; and this whole scene is to be shut up with no greater honour, than as yet hath been done to Christianity?

As God's people the *Jews* travell'd out of a severe Government, through a barren wilderness, and many hard conflicts, into the promis'd Land; so their sufferings, and the event of them, represent the present condition and future hopes of the Church. The road to its enlargement and perfection seems to lie thro' difficult

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Thy Kingdom come.

81

difficult and troublesome paths, and it is to grow by many steps not yet understood, to be that *glorious Church*, such as the Spouse of Christ should be, *without spot or wrinkle.* Ephes. v. 27.

But besides, we have to justify our expectations in this point *a more sure Word of Prophecy, to which if we take heed we do well,* 2 Pet. i. 19. *as to a light shining in a dark place.* The greater part of the Prophets, especially the three last, are wholly spent in setting forth a state of things, which hath not yet been in the truth of the letter, and of which therefore we have as much assurance as that God is true. The promises of future peace and spiritual perfection to the Church are so numerous in the Prophets, that our Saviour found little reason to repeat them; he therefore check'd the forward and sanguine expectations of his Disciples, by letting them know the great distress and persecution, which were to come upon them before that time.

But that such hopes, tho' at a great distance, yet might not appear wholly foreign to his followers, he hath been pleas'd to set forth the future sufferings and triumphs of the Faithful in the book of the *Revelations*: which book, tho' yet seal'd up, and abused by the presumptuous curiosity of some, who pretend from thence to *determine the times and seasons*

sons that God hath put in his own power, yet is the Charter of God to his Church; and the completion of the great things contain'd in it should now be the matter of our hope and comfort, as it will hereafter be of our joy and admiration.

We have from hence therefore reason to expect, that the Church will in due time triumph over Heresy by Truth, over Sufferings by Perseverance, and over all the works of the Devil by greater Peace and Perfection; and these most certainly were the expectations of the greater part of the primitive Church; especially the *Western*, where the book of the *Revelations* was receiv'd as Canonical ^s. But it is to be confess'd, that the sudden

^s *The book of the Revelations was receiv'd for Canonical very early in the West: It is cited generally by all the Latin Fathers, without scruple; and Irenæus expressly asserts St. John to have been the author of it. But it seems not to have been allow'd in the East during the fourth Century, as St. Jerom informs us, Ep. 192. It is omitted in the catalogues of Canonical Books, Can. Ap. 85. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Cyril. Hierosol. Concil. Load. It is rejected by Epiphanius, Hær. 51. tho' in that he contradicts himself; and Athanasius mentions it, Ep. Fest. Tom. 2. yet he doth it as his own judgment, not as the determination of the Church. However the reason is hence obvious, why we meet with so little relating to this matter in the writings of the Greek Fathers; for they not receiving this book as Canonical, wanted that necessary key to explain the old Prophets. Eusebius appears so much prejudic'd in this point, as to*
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sudden peace and tranquillity of the Church under *Constantine*, induc'd many to accommodate God's glorious promises to that time. Since which the Church having rather sunk than increas'd, the interpretations of the Prophets have been generally very abstruse and mystical; this fashionable way of expounding Scripture hath prevail'd in most of our late Expositors, and hath been the reason why these just and certain expectations are so much out of the way.

I would however beg leave to observe, that the interpretation of Scripture to the letter (as far as the *Eastern* ways of expression will allow) is in it self most agreeable to truth, and would in the consequence of it give a better view of Christianity. This method of interpretation would very probably in due time reconcile the *Jews*, who are not more faulty in the literal ways of expounding, than the Christians are in being too mystical, and by that means eluding the sense of the ancient Prophecies. I would likewise add, that this expectation of future perfection to the Church, would increase our present reverence for the Head of it, our Lord *Jesus*.

account all the literal interpretations Jewish explications, and to call the followers of them Hereticks.

Rev. xvii.
14.

His Divinity would not be so much oppos'd, if it was believ'd (what is faithfully promis'd) that all the Kingdoms of the World are to *become our Lord and Saviour's*. He would appear more to be the Son of God with power, if the future Condition of Christianity was expected to declare him (what he now really is, and will hereafter be more visibly declar'd) *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*.

Secondly, From praying that this Kingdom may come, we should learn to be chearful in any outward distress of the Church.

We are from hence not to be disturb'd, if this spiritual Kingdom be not arriv'd to its perfection, since our Prayers that it may come, suppose that it is not as yet come. If the Church be divided in its faith, distress'd in its condition, or corrupted in its discipline, (and it is generally one or other of these,) against these imperfections our Saviour hath taught us to pray, and by that hath foretold that they should happen. The narrowness of its extent, or the want of power over those that profess it, are an argument that it is not yet arriv'd to maturity, but ought to be no grounds of discontent or despair.

The merciful purposes of God were to be brought about consistently with human liberty,

Thy Kingdom come.

85

ty, and therefore requir'd a slow execution, according to that of the Prophet : *who hath* ^{Ifai. lxvi. 8.} *heard such a thing, or who hath seen such things ? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once ?* The works of the Devil might at once have been destroy'd with an Almighty violence ; but probably neither with that Glory to God, nor that Happiness to Mankind. Those distresses, through which the Church is to go, exercise our patience in bearing them, and our faith and dependence upon God for their removal ; and do withal in the consequence of them bring about those publick ends for which we pray. The *Lord there-* ^{2 Pet. iii. 9.} *fore is not slack concerning his promise ;* he can neither desert nor forget his purposes ; and what his Mercy hath designed and reveal'd, his Providence will certainly execute. But in the mean time this petition being made a standing Prayer to the Church, while it is so, should stop our clamours for some present grievances in it, since we by praying that God's Kingdom may come, do own, that there are some things yet wanting to its completion.

Thirdly, This petition should dispose us to Unity.

Thy Kingdom come.

However narrow we may be in our notions, yet we are not to be so in that Prayer our Saviour hath taught. We pray not here for this or that particular Church, but for that diffusive universal one that makes up Christ's Kingdom. How distant soever they may be in place, or how different soever in their interests, (tho' Christians, to speak properly, can have but one,) yet as they *hold of Christ the head*, they are to have a share both in our Prayers and our affections: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are call'd in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.*

Ephes. iv.
4, 5.

It is not in the Church as it is in the World, where the flourishing of one Family, or Country, is a necessary hindrance to another; and we cannot wish well to others, for no other reason but because we do so to our selves: But Christianity leaves no room, nor indeed gives allowance, to so selfish dispositions, but we may all pursue the same path to happiness without hindrance to each other. The promotion of Truth and Righteousness in one part, doth not either destroy or lessen them in another, but by an encouraging example really advances them; and withal promotes the common interest, in
hastening

Thy Kingdom come.

87

hastening that Kingdom in which all desire a share. We are not therefore to measure our zeal for Christ's service, and our affection for the members of his Body, by the narrow rules of civil life; and tho' the influence of our endeavours may be confin'd to that Countrey in which we live, yet our hope and our charity should be as extensive as this petition that wishes peace and perfection to the universal Church.

Fourthly, and lastly, this Prayer for God's Kingdom obliges us to do our best to promote it.

Our behaviour should be agreeable to this and our other Prayers, and we should our selves too contribute to that success which we ask of God. Our wishes for this Kingdom are so much useless breath, if we do not according to our station increase the knowledge and encourage the practice of Religion: and this matter is more in our power than we generally think. Some by their authority, others by their capacity, and almost all by their example, may be serviceable to this end; and if they be not so, they mock God with insincere petitions. We reckon him a most infamous traitor, that can at any price be bought either out of duty to his Sovereign, or concern for his Countrey. But yet this

Thy Kingdom come.

disobedience to a Prince, and desertion of our fellow subjects, cannot be more treasonable in any temporal Kingdom, than our corrupt or our negligent behaviour are in a spiritual. Not only the open contempt of Religion, but even our criminal indifference of it, is treason against Heaven; and we strengthen the Devil's party as well by the connivance, as by the practice of wickedness. How meanly and basely do those act, who profess themselves members of this Kingdom, and yet have no care or concern for the conduct of it; but withal how inconsistently, while they are bidding open defiance to their Lord, to wish as they do in this Prayer for his coming? To conclude, we can then only be said to pray effectually for God's Kingdom when it is the desire of our hearts, and the business of our lives to advance it; and the sense of our endeavours this way, however unsuccessful in their issue, will be the most encouraging motive to wish for our Lord, and the best preparation to receive him. *Who is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath set over his household, to give them meat in due season? blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

Matt.
xxiv. 45.

S E R M O N



S E R M O N IV.

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M A T T. VI. 10.

*Thy Will be done on Earth,
as it is in Heaven.*



THE words^a are capable of two senses, they either signify or request for a passive submission to God's Providence, or an active obedience to his Will. Those who follow the former sense observe, that our Saviour us'd this expression upon

^a This article is omitted in the vulgar Latin of St. Luke; and, as Dr. Mills says, is in none of the ancient copies. Tho' there is one of some antiquity in the Library of Lincoln's-Inn, which the Doctor probably never met with, that hath it. It appears to have been wanting both in St. Austin's and Origen's time. Ostendens ergo Lucas tertiam petitionem duarum superiorum esse quodam modo repetitionem, magis eam præ-

90 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

upon the like occasion; *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done.* They therefore make the words express our resignation in all conditions; *thy Will be done*; that is, let our wills be submissive to all thy disposals of us and our affairs; and whatever thy Wisdom shall appoint, let it be our virtue patiently and cheerfully to receive.

But the latter sense that refers the words to an active obedience, is follow'd by all the antient Interpreters, and is most agreeable to the context. For wherein but in such an obedience to God can his *Kingdom* be said *to come*? What, but the practice of holiness, can justify the comparison of Earth to Heaven; and how can we in submission, patience and resignation, be said to resemble the Bless'd above, from whose eyes God hath already

termittendo fecit intelligi. D. Aug. ad Laurent. Ὁ λαῶς, μὴ τὸ ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, ἔταξε τὸ ἄρλον ἡμῶν τὸ ἐπιστοιον δίδω ἡμῖν καθ' ἡμέραν. Origen. lib. de Oratione. From this and some other variations, together with the different circumstances of persons to which each Prayer was spoke, it is probable that the Prayer in St. Matthew is not the same with that of St. Luke, and might be much more different formerly than at present. The Church hath constantly us'd the Prayer in St. Matthew, which hath been the means to preserve it so entire, that there is not one various reading in the whole. Vide Milles Testament.

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wip'd away all tears, and given them rest from their labours? By doing God's Will therefore we here mean the obedience to his commands; and by praying that it *may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*, we ask for Grace, whereby we may be enabled, like the blessed Spirits in Heaven, perfectly and chearfully to perform it.

I shall treat of the words in this method.

First, Shew what is meant by God's Will.

Secondly, Enquire in what manner it may be said to be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven.

Thirdly, Shew what we particularly ask for our selves in desiring this.

First, What is meant by God's Will.

The Will of God, saith the Apostle, *is our sanctification*; it contains all those rules of duty, that he hath impos'd upon his creatures in order to make them holy, as he is holy, and *perfect, as he their Father is perfect*. It is call'd therefore in respect of our own narrow and imperfect dispositions, *the good and acceptable and perfect Will of God*; and is set forth in those several Laws, which he hath made the condition and measure of his favour. 1 Theff. iv. 3.

Rom. xii. 2.

If men were left to the guidance of their own Wills, without any restraint from above, guilt

92 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

guilt would then be their character, and misery their portion. Nothing could be more unhappy, or more deservedly so than they, if they were given up to their own hasty and unguarded desires. Their appetites, when neither directed by God's Law, nor restrain'd by his Grace, would prove unfaithful counsellors, and would sink them both in their merit and condition, *as low as the beasts that perish.* They would not in this undirected station have one thought for their real good, and would sell their wishes, their endeavours, and their whole hopes, for a few present pleasures, which would be short and disappointing in their enjoyment, but severe and bitter in their remembrance. The noblest part of the Creation would be thus ignorant of its interest, or forward in the pursuit of it, if it was not directed by him, who *tho' on high, yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are done on Earth.*

Psal. xix.
7, 8.

But as the pursuit of our own sensual Wills tends to our destruction, so the obedience to God's Will doth in the very consequence of it tend to our peace and happiness. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoyce the heart; the commandment*

mandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.

God hath by these his Laws preserv'd us from (our worst enemies) our wild affections, and hath mercifully restrain'd that liberty which we should abuse to our ruin. He hath made his service the most perfect freedom ; and in laying his commands hath not so much consider'd what he hath right to require of his creatures, as what is fit and useful for them to do. He doth not load them with arbitrary and unnecessary impositions, and requires no more duty, than a steady and faithful prosecution of their best interest. His Laws are the united work of infinite Wisdom and Mercy ; and as they design our good, so they naturally promote it. The observance of every part of God's Will, makes us more reasonable and more spiritual, and is so many steps forward to happiness, either in possession or expectation. This severity of duty, this denial of our selves and the World, which the Gospel enjoyns, are the useful provisions of a wise Father, and necessarily promote in us that degree of Holiness, *without which no man shall, or indeed can, see the Lord.* He gives us eternal Life upon the lowest terms ; and requires no other condition of *the pleasures at his right hand*, than those
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94 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

very dispositions that can prepare us for them.

God's Will, to those sensual affections that are to be reform'd and mortify'd by it, may appear a severe institution; *and one of those hard lessons who can bear it?* But if it be consider'd in its proper light, in the tenderness of it to promote and prepare us for God's Mercy, we should be thankful for having this direction of eternal Truth, instead of the fallible and dangerous guidance of our own fleshly appetites. This Will of God should be doubly engaging, both in the authority and usefulness of it; in the one, as it is the command of him, who, by creating us, hath a right to all that we can do; in the other, as it is the advice of a merciful Father, who hath no other design by revealing it, but to make his children eternally happy.

Rom. ii.
15.

This Will of God then is to be the guide and measure of ours, and is discover'd either by natural Conscience, or revelation from Scripture. Those, who are not yet in the Covenant of Grace, may be said to do his Will, and may hope for his favour, by faithfully following the directions of uncorrupted natural light. *They shew, saith the Apostle, the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing them witness, and their*

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for their thoughts accusing or excusing each other. For this reason the eternal Word is call'd by St. John, *that light that enlightens every man that cometh into the World*; and the Philosophers, who, before our Saviour's Incarnation, followed truth sincerely, are said, by ^b the Fathers, to have liv'd (*ἐκ ἀνδ' λόγῳ*) not without the assistance of the *Word*; by which they impute all the antient discoveries that set truth and virtue in a better light, to the influence of the eternal Word, the Son of God. The knowledge of duty from reason and revelation, are portions of the same heavenly light in different degrees; and he that acts against the suggestions of his conscience, is guilty of the same disobedience as he, who *despiseth the voice of him that speaketh from Heaven*.

But it is withal to be observ'd, that though Morality, as taught by the light of Nature, may be the whole of God's Will to one that is not a Christian; yet it is far from being so to him who professeth himself a disciple of our Saviour, who *came from Heaven to teach more perfectly his Father's Will*. He, by following natural light, is not *far from the Kingdom of God*; but that alone

^b Vide *Iust. Mart. Apol. 2.* *Clem. Alex. Stromat. 6.*

96 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

will not make him a true member of it. The Gospel is the only immediate rule of practice to one who hath hopes in his Saviour; and this as it proposeth greater perfection in the reward, so doth it require greater measures of obedience in obtaining it. These two standards of God's Will, Reason and Revelation, however they may promote the same end, yet are very different in their extent, Christians being abridg'd of many liberties, which as men they might innocently take.

The Laws of Nature seem to regard only outward order and decency, while those of the Gospel require inward purity and holiness: the dictates of Nature demand only strict Justice in our dealings, whereas those of our Saviour proceed to a more extensive charity, whereby we are to *rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and mourn with them that weep*. The one allows us to return *like for like*, the other commands us to do *good for evil*: by the former we are obliged to no more temperance, than such as keeps the faculties in good order; by the other we are requir'd to mortify our corrupt affections, and *to take up our cross and follow our Saviour*. By this short view of these two rules of God's Will it appears, that the one is more extensive than the other; and that we cannot be

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Rom. xii.
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said to fulfil the whole of that Will, without making the Gospel the immediate rule of it.

It is farther observable, that this new revelation by our Lord *Jesus*, doth not wholly supersede the use of natural light, but that the one is serviceable to the other. The Scripture lays down the general rules of practice, but descends not to all the particular cases to which they may be apply'd; but it is the office of natural light to be the casuist, and by comparing *spiritual things with spiritual*, to determine how far in some circumstances those general rules do, or do not, oblige. To illustrate this by an instance: our Saviour requires us in general, *to do to others as we would they should do to us*; Matt. vii. 12. but at the same time he hath neither apply'd this maxim to all the particular circumstances of life, nor set forth the several limitations and exceptions to which it is liable. This office therefore is left to the natural light within us, which is to compare the extent of each duty with the general reason of Christianity. And therefore tho' we cannot, without the highest disobedience, pronounce upon any part of God's Law, that it is not fit or reasonable; yet we may venture to determine some particular cases, in which such Laws are liable to exception.

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From

98 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

Exod.
xviii. 20.

Mal. ii. 7.

From hence by the way it appears, that the sense of Scripture is not in every part of it so self-evident, but that it needs more than vulgar care and distinction in applying it to particular cases. The knowledge of it, like other Sciences, is got by the due use of humane means; and shews the necessity of an Order of men, who by leisure and improvement may be better fit to *teach the people ordinances and laws, to shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work which they must do.* It is therefore spoken by the Prophet of the times of the Gospel, that the *Priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the minister of the Lord of Hosts.*

To conclude, the Will of God is in the general intention of it *our sanctification*, and he hath discovered that his Will in two ways: in that portion of natural light with which he hath bless'd every one; and in the more perfect copy of it, the revelation of his Son from Heaven.

Secondly, I must shew, how God's Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Now this must be in imitating all those dispositions, with which we may suppose those above to serve God. It is to be confess'd, that little is said in Scripture of the
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merit and condition of the bless'd above : but they are thus in short describ'd by the *Psalmist* : *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments,* ^{Pf. ciii. 20.} *bearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.*

From this short character it appears, in the first place, that they do God's Will from a principle of obedience.

They readily perform God's commands as such, and for no other motives than because he is pleas'd to impose them. They have no little interests distinct from their Master's service ; and therefore whatever they do, they do singly for his sake. This must be the natural consequence of seeing God, and enjoying the *pleasures* at his right hand. They must from this near approach have too quick a sense of God's goodness in himself, and of the effusion of it upon his creatures, to want any motives to please him. If they have any disposition (as those blessed Spirits certainly must have in a great degree) to admire what is excellent, or to love what is kind and beneficent to themselves ; they must readily obey that God, whom they know to be so unspeakably eminent in both.

100 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

Now this principle of obedience is more or less wanting in the most shining services of mortals, and is therefore with great reason ask'd for in this petition. Many parts of God's Will, especially the relative duties, have an immediate tendency to make them happy in this World; and therefore may be, and indeed frequently are, done from worldly motives. Moral duties, as to their external practice, may be common to an Infidel and a Believer; but the principle by which they are influenc'd makes the difference: if they proceed from secular views, they are then no better than the Arts of civil prudence; but they have only the merit and reward of God's Will when done upon a principle of obedience. A *singleness of heart* is particularly recommended by the Gospel; and no less than that can, or ought, to be accepted by the searcher of hearts. A Being of less knowledge and bounty, who from the one had no title to command our affections, or from the other but small means to discover them, might be content with such *eye-service*, in which he had only the name, and another the fruits. But the Lord of Heaven and Earth hath the justest claim to the utmost sincerity of our obedience, and readily discovers and resents all the deficiencies in it.

Nothing

Nothing therefore can have the name, or at least, the reward of God's service, but what is done *as to him and not unto men.* *The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* He rewards all that is Religion in us, but nothing more; he puts not to his own account the discreet Temperance, the designing Charity, the necessary Justice, or the grave Hypocrisy, which the World extorts from us: he leaves us to seek the recompence of these from that present power, or esteem we thereby gain amongst our fellow creatures; but he reserves his bounty for those who have serv'd him with *Spirit and Truth*, and by seeking only his favour have thereby deserv'd it.

This sincere principle of obedience is one condition by which God's Will *may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*, and is therefore ask'd for in this petition. Nothing can be imputed to us as the performance of God's service, but what is done upon his account; and his pleasure must be the end and motive of our actions, if we expect that his bounty shall reward them.

Secondly, God's Will is done in Heaven more perfectly.

102 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

The obedience of the blest above, is both sincere in its principle, and universal in its extent; and they are therefore call'd *those Ministers of his that do his pleasure*. God's Will receives a through compliance from those faithful Spirits. They do not, ^c saith a learned Father, discharge one small part of it and neglect all the rest, but uniformly apply themselves to perform the whole. They are not left to struggle with the corrupt Wills of themselves and others, and have no need to contend either with the violence or *deceivableness of unrighteousness*, but every thing about them facilitates their obedience.

But a little acquaintance with the general conduct of mankind, will shew their deficiency, and thereby the great necessity of this petition. They measure the obedience they owe to God, by their own partial and narrow inclination; and by the performance of some one easy duty, commute for the neglect of all the rest. They, like the Scribes in our Saviour's time, reduce the whole Law to *one great Commandment*; and make that

^c Ο λέγει τοίνυν τοιῶτὸν ἐστὶ, ὥσπερ ἐκὼ πάντα ἀκωλύτως γίνεται, καὶ εἰ τὰ μὴ ὑπακούουσιν οἱ ἄγγελοι, τὰ δὲ παρακλύουσιν, ἀλλὰ πάντα εἰκούσι καὶ πείθονται, ἕτω καὶ ἡμᾶς καθ' ἡμᾶς τῆς ἀνθρώπου μὴ ἐξ ἡμισείας τὸ θέλημά σου ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ πάντα, καθάπερ θέλεις πληρῶν. *Chrysost. in locum.*

one great Commandment something that may cost them as cheap as may be. They consider not so much what God's Will requires, as what their own stubborn and sensual appetites can comply with, and therefore stop at the first uneasiness of duty. Their Virtues are all complexional, and they make a merit of that before God, which is the consequence of their own natural dispositions.

Every one's habitual complexion or station in the World, disposeth them more easily to one duty than another; but if that come single, it is not the obedience which resembles Heaven. Thus the man of phlegm and indolence shall think his unavoidable easiness and good nature sufficient to discharge the whole debt of duty to God. The rigid Stoick shall put the whole issue of his cause upon a complexional severity of his own conduct, and an implacable censure of others. The Miser thinks himself a good servant to God, by his temperance and specious carefulness for his family; the Prodigal expects the same for his indiscreet bounty; the Coward for his justice, and the Courtier for his patience and convenient command of temper. Thus they falsely impute that to the power of Religion, which is either the work of Nature, or the predominancy of other Vices; and would be thought

104 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

to serve God, when they serve only themselves. Any one virtue, how great soever in its degree, if it stand alone, is not obedience to God's Will; and if he who is *guilty of one point is guilty of all*, what must be the case of those who are guilty of all points but one?

But as the sensual inclinations of some suffer them to do only one part of God's Will, so there is withal a narrowness of our dispositions on Earth, by which when we apply our selves seriously to one duty, we are tempted inadvertently to neglect others as necessary. Our sins, like a numerous enemy, surround us on all sides; and our care and diligence at one part, sometimes leave us defenceless at another. It is hard, even with a good inclination, to dispose our watchfulness so uniformly to all quarters, that the enemy may take no where any opportunity of surprize. So true it is *that in many things we offend all*, that our perfections in one part lead us to great and dangerous defects in another.

Thus some with an honest intention apply themselves to the duties of civil life; but then this useful and commendable application breaks in upon their religious cares, and they in the Patriot drop the Christian; and on the other

other hand, the warmth of the recluse shall make his devotion stand for the whole of God's Will: how useful soever he might be to others, he shall act as tho' he was born for his own sake, and by bearing no part in common life, defeat the ends of Providence, for which he was plac'd in it. A rigid behaviour, and a long course of self-denial, lead men sometimes to be inexorable in their judgment of others, who cannot, or perhaps need not, practise so great severities; and their well-meant zeal and uniform exactness, shall endanger their meekness and charity. To mention one instance more; a devout mind, tho' the greatest single perfection on this side the grave, hath its danger; and if not discreetly govern'd (so nearly allied are our virtues to our faults) is found to betray some into spiritual pride and sufficiency.

Now these defects which are more or less in all mankind, arise from a narrowness of humane minds, which suffers them not to pursue above one thing at once, and makes therefore great difference between the observance of *God's Will on Earth, and that in Heaven*; however that use should be made of these defects, as to desire for them either a supply of strength from God's Grace, or forgiveness from his Mercy. We should with
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106 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

the more earnestness send up this petition, for power to do his Will perfectly and universally, since we are so liable to be deficient in it: we should endeavour to root out this partiality of judgment, that makes us obstinately disobedient to some parts of duty; and withal we should watch that inadvertency of our affections, which tempts us to be indiscreetly negligent of others; and we cannot make a better provision in both these cases, than by the sincere and serious use of this petition.

Thirdly, God's Will is done in Heaven more chearfully.

Our obedience to God must be much more acceptable from the chearfulness with which it is perform'd; and this is one circumstance wherein those above may be justly suppos'd to excel. They have with this life laid aside every *weight and sin that so easily besets them*, and rest at once both from their infirmities and their labours; they are not disturbed with (that consequence of guilt, and evidence of humane misery) a reluctance of Will to their duty; but as they have no difficulty in directing their desires, so are they in no danger of disapproving them afterwards. Their nearer view of the Divine excellencies cannot suffer them to love with indifference, but
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makes it their unwearied employment to praise him, *who hath thus loved them, and washed them from their sins; and made them Kings and Priests to God.* Rev. i. 5, 6.

But the disposition of men to do God's Will is as different from this alacrity, as Earth is from Heaven. They are made up of two contrary parts, by which constitution, as the wise Man observes, *the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that misseth on many things.* Wisd. ix. 15. The Gospel, which is the rule and measure of duty, is against every thing that is sensual and delightful in us; requiring us, as the Apostle observes, *not to be conform'd to this world, but to be transform'd in the renewing of our minds.* Rom. xii. 2. He who will make God's Will the rule of his own, must prefer the things that are not seen to the things that are; and in doing so, must meet with the reluctance of his hasty affections, and the uncertainty and irresolution of his judgment. This struggle between Flesh and Spirit is a just reason why the station of men upon Earth is call'd a *warfare*, since every instance of true obedience is a conflict of the one part of the man with the other. *The good that I would, that I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do,* was the complaint

108 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

complaint of St. *Paul*; and as it was his case before his conversion, is undoubtedly that of most of mankind. There is some rebellion of Will more or less remaining even in the best of men; and the strife between the spiritual and the carnal part is seldom so perfectly decided, as not to leave some uneasiness in denying a craving affection. The perfection of this life may be compar'd to the *Harvest* in the Gospel, where some *good corn* was mix'd with *many tares*; and there are few that may not, from a better knowledge of themselves, justly complain, in the words of the *Psalmist*, *who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.* The joy and chearfulness which should be found in God's service, are diverted by worldly and inferior cares; and our lives, when view'd in their best light, represent a few intervals of religious joy lost in many wide spaces of sin and misery.

The different obedience which is paid to God's Will on Earth and in Heaven, shews in part the different enjoyments of each place. One great circumstance of Happiness above is, that they have but one predominant desire, which is undisturb'd in the conduct, and comfortable in the end of it; and that is, to obey and please their Maker. But as for men, tho' they

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they cannot possibly be happy without doing God's Will, yet neither during these struggles of Nature can they be easy in doing it. The opposition of their fleshly lusts to the spiritual part of them, necessarily breeds in them grief and anxiety; they are under the perpetual necessity, either of *grieving the good Spirit of God*, or of quarrelling with their most familiar and favourite desires; and the peace of Conscience is ever to be maintain'd, by an open war with their dearest affections.

The commands of God are so many certain guides to eternal Happiness, but their own corrupt Wills throw briers and thorns in the way; and either wholly obstruct their passage, or make it narrow and troublesome. While they are disturb'd by their affections in the prosecution of duty, and are distracted in their choice, between God's Will and their own: while they can neither be sinners without remorse, nor Christians without unpleasing severity and self-denial, they cannot have that peace and joy, which are the portion of compos'd and undisturb'd minds. From hence it is obvious to observe, that as all the improvements in Religion do in proportion remove this reluctance to goodness and difficulty of choice, so do they at the same time root out all the seeds of trouble and anxiety.

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110 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

We grow by the same steps to perfection, both in our performances and condition, and the obedience and the joys of Heaven must necessarily come together.

These then are the several ways in which they above exceed those on Earth in their obedience; they do God's Will more sincerely, perfectly, and chearfully; and we in this petition desire to be enabled with power and inclination to do the same. When we thus pray, we ask not for some one single blessing to be added to the heap of many more, but for something that is the foundation of all other blessings: we herein sue for the truest comfort of this life, and the surest pledge of the next; we ask for the power of Goodness from God's Grace, and the reward of it from his Bounty, and with a holy ambition, aim at the merit and station of *just men made perfect*.

The third proposition is to shew, what we particularly ask of God for ourselves in desiring, *that his Will may be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven*.

We here desire God to give us that strength, which we have not by Nature, to perform what he hath commanded. The corrupt condition of humane Nature, shews both the extent and necessity of this petition; *I know,*
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saith the Apostle, *that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.* The matter of God's Will is too contrary to the stubborn and sensual inclinations of men, to receive an easy and chearful compliance without assistance from above. The power of pleasing God is from himself, and it is he who *gives us to will and to do after his good pleasure.* To deny ourselves in the most unpleasing instances; to mortify those affections, for which Nature pleads so strongly; to be regardless of our present ease, for the sake of something distant and not yet seen; to have, whilst on Earth, *our conversation in Heaven*, are not the single work of humane power, but the effect of being *strengthen'd with might by the Spirit in the inner man.* Rom. vii. 18.
Ephes. iii. 16.

The Rewards of Religion are sufficient to outbid all the World can offer at present; but these rewards lose their influence, for want either of memory, or attention. Our minds, when left to themselves, would, by worldly cares or pleasures, be diverted either from thinking at all upon *the one thing needful*, or from pursuing it uniformly and constantly. There is wanting a remembrancer, that by importunate and seasonable whispers may keep them

112 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

them awake, and attentive to their true interest.

This is therefore the work of God's Spirit which removes or helps our infirmities, by setting before our eyes a clearer and more undisturbed prospect of the *Glory that shall be revealed*; the effects of it are neither an irresistible force, or blind ill-grounded Enthusiasm; but by a holy and reasonable violence, it persuades us to be good from a sense of our gratitude or expectations. It doth not offer new motives for obedience (for those are already plentifully afforded by Revelation) but it keeps the remembrance of them fresh and vigorous in our minds. Religion is not so much heat without light; it requires the mixture of a sound head and an honest heart, and the warmth of the affections must be produc'd by (that single work of the Spirit) the persuasion of the judgment. The Holy Spirit is for this work call'd the *Paraclete* or the *Encourager*; but the *Comforter* (or, as it is truly render'd, the ^d *Admonisher* or *Encourager*) *which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father*

John xiv.
26.

^d The word *παράκλητος* seems very improperly to be render'd Comforter, which is countenanc'd by none of the ancient versions; the vulgar Latin and the Syriac retain the word it self without translating it. The word signifies in the Greek

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Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Spirit, that at that time brought all things to remembrance, continues to do the same office for Believers to the end of the World: As it reminded the Apostles of what they had receiv'd from their Lord, so it reminds us of what we have receiv'd, both from him and them; it makes no additions to God's Will in any part of it, but only with friendly and intelligible whispers, repeats the same lessons of Truth, and the same promises of Happiness we read in Scripture. By these importunate admonitions, if attended to, men are brought *to will and to do after God's good pleasure*: they are, by the Spirit of Truth, reminded of the knowledge of their duty, and enamour'd with the reward of it; and by both these together enabled to do *God's Will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.*

Authors an Advocate or Patron in a Cause; but is no where put for Comforter. Vide Budæi Comm. in l. Græc. The verb παρκαλῶ, from whence it is derived, signifies to encourage and advise; and therefore that sense of the word expresses more truly the work and office of the Spirit in this place.

114 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

All the conditions of obedience which are so eminently conspicuous in those above, and so much wanting in mortals below, are brought about by this habitual assistance. That sincerity, perfection, and chearfulness, with which we must please God in all our performances, are wrought in us by *one and the same Spirit*. If we are deficient for want of knowledge, or attention to our duty, what can be so likely to improve us in this point, as he, whose office it is to *lead us into all Truth*, and to impress that Truth more strongly upon our minds? If our dispositions be not vigorous enough, so that *when we would do good, evil is present*; this kind assistant, *strengthening us with might in the inner man*, ceases the strife between the *law in our members*, and the *law in our minds*. Lastly, the undisturb'd joy and chearfulness in doing God's Will, which is the portion and perfection of the next life, and is, here, more or less broke by the reluctance of our affections, and our distracted or repenting choice of good, is the gradual work of this blessed Spirit. That peace and composure of mind, which is indeed but small in comparison of what may be expected, is the consequence of our having but one Will of our own, and therefore is wholly owing to these suggestions

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ons *that* by degrees *renew a right Spirit* Gal. v. 22.
within us. Hereupon the *fruits of the Spirit* are said to be *love, joy, and peace*; and the *Kingdom of Heaven* is, according to the same Apostle, *righteousness, peace, and joy,* Rom. xiv.
in the Holy Ghost. 17.

For this enlightning and strengthening Spirit we ask, as oft as we pray, that God's *Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* We by this petition profess our sufficiency not to be from ourselves, but from him, and that the merit as well as the reward of our obedience, are his gifts in Christ *Jesus.*

The practical uses of this petition are these following.

First, The Prayer that God's Will may be done, is in those that use it a tacit promise of obedience to it.

They that thus pray, as oft as they do so, enter into a new covenant with God, and should think every repetition of it a fresh obligation to do no more *what is good in their own eyes.* They give the lye to this petition who offer it up with an unresolv'd, unprepar'd Soul; and while they are praying for God's Will, are yet determin'd to follow their own. How inconsistent must it be to hold up Hands to Heaven for obedience, which

116 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

will be the next hour lift up in defiance against it; to petition for what they mean not to obtain; and to vow daily, as they do in this Prayer, obedience to God, when their whole lives are a continu'd rebellion against him? In short, our hearts and tongues should speak the same language in this and all other Prayers, and we should beforehand resolve to do our parts to the success of that which we ask of God.

Secondly, The different obedience on Earth and in Heaven should teach us to endeavour for greater perfection.

Our Saviour, by teaching his disciples to pray for the obedience of Heaven, sets before them a more perfect model of it. When they consider that chearfulness with which God's Will is perform'd above, they will be convinc'd of the necessity not only of perseverance, but even of progress in their religious course.

There is no greater hindrance to Christian perfection than the observing either what others are, or what we ourselves have been. When men measure their conduct by (the worst rule of Religion) common practice: when they, from the greater deficiency of others, find something to magnify their merit, or to justify their failings, they easily

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think themselves forward in their course, because some few are behind them. And on the other side, when they, with a dangerous partiality overlook their remaining defects, and consider more that weakness from whence they are grown, than that strength to which they should proceed; they from hence neglect to grow in Grace, and, because they have done a little of God's Will, vainly think they have done the whole of it. These men therefore *comparing themselves with themselves*, or with mortals as weak and imperfect, *are not wise*; and for want of proceeding, will fall very short of *the race set before them*.

But they will have little grounds for presumption, if they would look to that greater measure of obedience requir'd by God's Law, or the more perfect examples of it in those *ministers of his that do his pleasure*. When they consider that uniformity and chearfulness, with which God's Will is done in Heaven, they will be both convinc'd and asham'd of their deficiency; they will from hence be excited to proceed with a holy emulation, *from strength to strength*, and endeavour, as the Apostle advises, *to go on to perfection*. Heb. vi. 1

The great work of Religion is not to be done once for all, and then to be laid aside:

118 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

Phil. iii.
12.

but the obligations to improve it are as lasting as our lives, and as extensive as our capacities. What *St. Paul* said of himself, should be the rule to all Christians; *Not as though I had already attain'd, or were already perfect;—but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

The progress in goodness is much like the ascent to a mountainous Country, where every step forward offers fresh hills to the sight; and the farther they proceed, so much greater work seems to be left behind. Hereupon the Novices in Religion, like those in Knowledge, are generally most presumptuous; whereas their farther growth in it will convince them of their demerit and deficiency: and that at best they want God's support in their remaining course, and his compassion in *Christ Jesus* at the end of it. When they have proceeded from this uncertainty of judgment, and reluctance of the affections to some taste of divine things, they will still find reason to lament the want of that perfect obedience, which God hath deserv'd by his Goodness, and requir'd by his Law. How far advanc'd soever any one may think himself,

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yet he hath still no grounds either for idleness, or presumption; he will, notwithstanding his greatest improvements, need the success of this petition, and can only shew his sincerity in using it, by endeavouring to *abound more and more.*

But farther, the different performance of God's *Will on Earth and in Heaven*, should be the matter of comfort to all well-meaning Christians. The comparison shews, that there must of course be some deficiency in our resolutions, and more in the prosecution of them; that there will be, during this life, an imperfection in merit as well as station; and that while we are *present in the body*, we shall in some degree be *absent from the Lord*. A good mind should not be disturb'd, because while on Earth it cannot pay the easy and undisturb'd obedience of Heaven, since some reluctance of inclination is the condition of its being here; and, when repented of, is, in the sight of our heavenly Father, more the matter of trial than an article of guilt.

Christianity puts not the professors of it in an absolute state of perfection, but only in the progress towards it, which will not be finish'd till the next life. It supposes not men free from all infirmities, but that they are truly

120 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

sensible of them; and by repentance and faith in their Redeemer, are desirous of pardon for these defects. The tenor of the Gospel requires not an unsinning obedience as the condition of Salvation; (for where would be the mercy of the new Covenant, or the fruits of Christ's death, if it was so?) but accepts us upon our sincere, tho' imperfect, endeavours. The duties of the Cross, are suppos'd to be against the bent of humane inclination; and it therefore should be no matter of grief, if we bear them rather with a passive submission, than an active choice. Our Saviour, the greatest example of obedience the World ever saw, went no farther than this; and tho' he patiently drank off the bitter cup, yet beforehand desir'd, that, *if it was possible, it might pass from him.* He, *who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust,* will be far from rejecting us for the condition of humane Nature. Let not any well-meaning Christian disturb himself, because he hath not all possible capacity, vigour, and chearfulness, in doing his duty; his infirmities, if they decrease, tho' but slowly, should not discourage him; and his quick sense of them (which may be said for his comfort) is the best argument, both of his present strength and future perseverance.

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The third practical use of this Prayer is Humility.

We, by praying to God that his *Will may be done*, own the power of doing it to be from him; and the dependence which is hereby profess'd, requires great modesty in our opinions of ourselves. This Prayer should remind us of that necessary advice of the Apostle, *not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.* Rom. xii. ^c St. Chrysostom justly observes, that great Humility should be the effect of thus praying; because we are taught by it, that virtue is not the single effect of our own strength, but is owing to the influence of Divine Grace.

Now this should be the thought of every one who believes, as he hath reason, that he here begs for that assistance, without which *he can do nothing*. How unnatural must it be to presume upon that merit, which in strict propriety cannot be call'd our own; and to give ourselves the praise of any attainments, the power of which is from another? How unjust and ungrateful is it to boast of good fruits, when both the seed sown, and the increase of that seed are from above? In short, with how much reason should the best of men

^c Chrysost. in locum.

122 *Thy Will be done on Earth,*

humble themselves before God, when they are only by his favour and assistance made pleasing in his sight.

The pride of mankind (the effect of corrupt Nature) indisposes them to that mortifying truth, which shews them their insufficiency and dependence, and requires them to think humbly of themselves, and reverently and thankfully of God in this point. Though there be less comfort, yet there is more praise (and that with some is temptation enough) in believing all their attainments to be truly their own, and attributing the suggestions of the Holy Spirit which caus'd them, to the natural and ordinary motions of human minds. But in this they both mistake the efficacy, and defeat the purposes of God's Mercy: they are insensible how much happier they are in being supported by the enlightning and directing Spirit of God, than in being left to their own single conduct; and they want the comfort (and a great one it is) of being persuaded, that *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.*

All our several improvements should be accounted, as they are, the effects of God's Grace; and every step we advance forward in goodness, should be thought a fresh argument of his kindness, and a new call for thank-

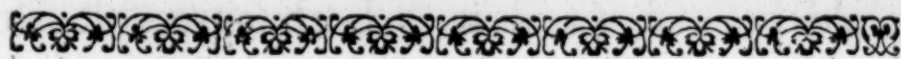
thankfulness on our part. Our humility and modesty (so ill-grounded is the confidence of the most shining attainments) should keep pace with our growth; and, as in all other successes, so more especially in that of doing God's Will, we should justly and thankfully give *not ourselves, but him the Glory*. We should believe (and it is both agreeable to Truth, and useful to Religion to do so) that our heavenly Father rewards in us his own work; that *he guides us by his counsels*, and for following them *receives us into Glory*.

To conclude, this humble thought, that the power of doing God's Will is in great measure from himself, should be the effect of habitually using this petition; and it should be the more so, because that disposition is the best pledge of success in asking; it gives the surest prospect of obtaining and enjoying that Spirit, that *resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble*.





S E R M O N V.



M A T T. VI. II.

*Give us this Day our daily
Bread.*



HIS is the first petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we pray particularly for our private necessities. The three foregoing articles express those wishes which are immediately directed to God's interest, being made for the honour of his Name, the establishment of his Church, and the universal performance of his Will. When we pray that God's *Name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his Will be done*, however we, who so pray, may share in the success and consequence of such petitions, yet *our Father in Heaven* is the first in our intentions.

We

We are hence taught (and an excellent lesson it is) to set our gratitude before our interest; and to let the zeal for God's Name precede our private concern for ourselves. From hence it is obvious to observe, that Christianity is founded in a true greatness of mind; and that this Prayer, which contains the model of it, requires those heights of gratitude and generosity, which are so much talk'd of, and so little practis'd in common life. That disinterested love of God, which we express by these wishes for his service, tho' it be the ordinary character of a Christian, yet is the greatest perfection in humane Nature.

But now we go on to ask the Giver of all good things the supply of all our wants, both spiritual and temporal. We, in the remaining petitions, supplicate his Bounty to our necessities, his Mercy and Forgiveness to our trespasses, and his preventing Grace under infirmities and temptations.

The petition for daily Bread^a is the first of these. In which three things are to be consider'd.

First,

^a The variations of St. Matthew, and St. Luke, are worthy of observation. St. Matthew reads, τὸ ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸ ἐπίσσιον εἰς ἡμῖν σήμερον. St. Luke, τὸ ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸ ἐπίσσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ

Give us this Day

First, What is the sense of the Words.

Secondly, What is particularly ask'd for in them.

Thirdly, What those practical uses are, that arise from thus praying.

First, The sense of the Words.

There have been two very different interpretations of these Words among the Antients.
^b The *African* Fathers have chose the mystical sense, and have explain'd this daily Bread of Christ's Body. They observe, that *as he was the living Bread that came down from Heaven*, so this living Bread is here pray'd for; and therefore suppos'd, that the spiritual food and nourishment, receiv'd in the holy Sacrament, were the subject of this petition. This interpretation seems partly owing to the primitive custom of receiving the Communion

τὸ καὶ ἡμεῶν. Where the Latin renders it, Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodiè. Two things are from hence probable; the one, that ἐπίσσι being joyn'd to τὸ καὶ ἡμεῶν cannot signify daily, without allowing a great tautology. The other that ἐπίσσι was not read in St. Luke when it was translated into Latin; for quotidianum expresseth τὸ καὶ ἡμεῶν. And besides, it is hard to conceive why St. Jerome should translate it, in St. Matthew, supersubstantialem, and declare for that sense in his Comment; and yet in St. Luke read quotidianum.

^b Tertull. de Oratione. Cypr. de Oratione. Aug. in Lucam. Athanasius de Incarnatione.

daily,

daily, which might give the name of *daily Bread* to the sacred Elements; and partly to the pious mistake, that nothing temporal could be ask'd for in this Divine form.

But most certainly this is neither a true nor an useful sense of the words. This mystical explication of Bread is the product of warm imaginations; and is neither agreeable to our Saviour's design, nor to the notions of his hearers. He cannot be thought to teach them to pray for that heavenly Bread, of which probably they had never yet heard; and which was so far from being suited to the capacities of the multitude, that his Disciples, who John vi. must be suppos'd to have a more spiritual taste, when they afterward heard of it, were much offended. The holy Sacrament was not instituted till the night before our Saviour's Passion; and therefore could not be refer'd to in the Sermon upon the Mount, which was spoken at the beginning of his Ministry. It could not agree with the Wisdom of the Son of God, to make that the subject of the multitudes Prayers, which could not possibly be the object of their desires; and to teach them to ask importunately for something, that was above both their taste and conceptions. Besides, in asking for daily Bread in this spiritual sense, they ask'd for
nothing

Give us this Day

nothing distinct from the other petitions; the pardon of Sins and the blessing of God's Spirit (which are the effects of this spiritual food) being ask'd for in the rest.

Some indeed have thought, that the *Greek* word ^c (ἐπίσσι) which is added to *Bread*, might justify this mystical way of referring it to our Saviour's Body. But tho' it is to be confess'd, that the word is very improperly render'd *daily*, yet we may as well,

^c The word ἐπίσσι seems to be improperly translated daily. Those who so interpret it suppose it deriv'd from ἐπίσσε ἡμεῖς, which derivation is contrary to the analogy of the Greek; and besides would oblige us to render it, instead of daily Bread, to morrow's Bread. The Arabick, I suppose, for this reason, translates it panem crastinum; and St. Jerom, comm. in locum, affirms that מחר was the reading of the Hebrew copies: but all the antients who mention the word derive it from ἄρτος substantia. Suidas, ὁ ἐπὶ τῇ ἄρτι ἀγρόζων. An negant ἄρτων lectam cum & panem ἐπίσσιον dominus dixerit. Ambros. lib. 3. de Fide. St. Jerom renders it supersubstantialem for the same reason; and both he and Origen affirm, that ἐπίσσι is synonymous with περισσι. This then being the original of the word, it cannot signify daily. I would therefore observe, that the antient Church read it panem quotidianum; as appears from the citations both of Tertullian and St. Cyprian; which, as it did not express the word ἐπίσσι, is a strong presumption that it was not then in the text, but added as a marginal note, to express the mystical sense which then prevail'd. The true and antient reading may probably have been that of St. Luke, where from the vulgar Latin the word ἐπίσσιος appears to have been wanting.

with

with the *Greek* Fathers†, render it substantial or necessary, as with the vulgar *Latin* super-substantial or spiritual. However, notwithstanding the different sense of the *Greek* word we have this reason still to use the word *daily*, because it is agreeable to the parallel place in *St. Luke*^d, and withal, no other word was us'd by the primitive Church till *St. Jerom's* time.

The literal interpretation of the words then is more probable, and *daily Bread* means no other than the necessaries of this life. Whatever some, of a more refin'd thought or warmer imagination, may now think, the hearers of our Saviour would interpret the words according to the custom and practice of that time; and therefore would think that they pray'd only for the supply of their temporal necessities. The *Jews*, with whom our Saviour convers'd, did at that time pray daily for plenty and fruitful seasons; and our Saviour by making *daily Bread* the subject of their Prayers, reminded them of their old condition in the wilderness, where they were miraculously fed by *Bread from Heaven*. Six hundred thousand travell'd through a sandy barren desert, where they were supported

† *Greg Nyssen. de orat. Theophylact. Chrysost. in locum.*

^d Τὸ καὶ ἡμεῖς.

by a constant miracle, and were oblig'd every morning to beg of God the subsistence of that Day. They being unprovided of all necessities, and destitute of all cares of their own, had no where to look for supply, but immediately from God's hand, and could only expect that supply by daily addresses for it.

However it is to be observ'd, that this journey of the *Jews* through an unprovided wilderness, in which they must instantly perish without Bread from Heaven, is but a true picture of human life. Mankind in the general condition of it is not less dependent upon Providence than they; the rewards of industry are as much to be esteem'd so many gifts of God, as the miraculous showering down of *Manna*; and we are all fed and supported by the same fatherly hand, tho' in different methods. We have from his bounty the possession, and from his blessing the use and service of worldly conveniencies; and we could neither obtain nor enjoy to good purpose any thing without his favour. We in this plentiful provision laid up for the morrow, have as much reason as the *Jews* in the wilderness to profess our great dependence upon our heavenly Father, and with as much submission desire him to give us our daily Bread.

Daily

our daily Bread.

131

Daily Bread then is here literally to be interpreted the temporal necessities of life; and our Saviour, by commanding us to pray for them, teacheth us to distinguish between the insensibility of the Stoick, and the religious faith of a Christian. He, by making worldly things the subject of one petition, shews that some concern for this world is not foreign to the profession of his Disciples; and yet by assuring them of success in that petition, teaches how soon this very concern should cease. *Commit thy way unto the Lord,* ^{Pf. xxxvii.} *saith the Psalmist, and put thy trust in him,* ^{5.} *and he shall bring it to pass.*

The second particular is to shew the several limitations of this petition.

First, We here ask only for what is necessary.

Bread, by a common and natural figure, signifies the necessities of life. "Our Saviour (as * an antient Father observes) hath not directed us to pray for superfluous wealth, for luxury, or any gratifications of that kind, but only for Bread, and in that for the mere necessities of life." We are to make that only the subject of our Prayers which Religion allows us to desire; the Gospel, not the insatiate appetites of men, is to be the measure of their wants;

* *Chrysoft.* in locum.

and a Christian must not by Prayer seek for any thing, which is contrary to his holy profession to enjoy : he is not to make God a party to his guilty or unguarded wishes, nor to pour out before the Judge of all things those petitions, which he will hereafter assuredly punish. He must not ask for that which God's Law hath forbid him to wish for ; and if he will obtain any thing by his bounty, he must pray for it *according to his will*. The prodigal and the voluptuous, have no reason in desiring daily Bread to expect the gratification of every wicked passion ; but, according to the

James iv.
2. Apostle, *they ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, to consume it upon their lusts*. The Prayers of such, when employ'd upon wants, which Nature doth not suggest, nor Religion justify, instead of being a reasonable service *are turn'd into sin*, and they increase their crimes, as oft as they come before God with such addressees.

But the limitation of this Prayer to the necessities of life, may be best understood by the general reason of Christianity. Our Saviour by requiring us *to lay up treasure in Heaven*, doth not so require it, as to forbid all manner of provision for this World. He doth not teach us to renounce all cares for the present, but requires that distinction in them,

them, that our spiritual interest may (as it deserves) have the first place. The Gospel doth not divest us of nature, but supposeth that we may have a due regard to that better part of us, our souls, and yet not wholly neglect our bodies.

We are here plac'd upon a short Stage, to make provision for eternal blifs, and our concern should be answerable to our interest; our first care, like the travellor's, should be for a welcome reception at the journey's end, and then for the conveniencies upon the journey. We must not make that provision as to mistake our inn for our home, and to be tempted to wish our selves at a greater distance from the end of our course.

A Christian may, consistently enough with his duty, carry his worldly concern so far, as to endeavour to make his passage through life easy and comfortable. He may ask for and enjoy the necessaries of life, as the *Israelites* did the Manna in the wilderness, who were to value it not so much for its taste, as because it was a necessary support in the road to a land flowing with milk and honey.

This petition then for daily Bread shews the true measure of Christian philosophy, requiring us to restrain our wishes by our wants, which are both few, and easily supply'd. *Tho'*

God be loving to every man, and his mercy over all his works: yet he allows us to ask nothing of him but what we may with purity desire, and with innocence enjoy. The Christian Religion, of which this Prayer is a perfect model, gives the most useful wisdom in informing us how little we want, and how easily we may obtain that little; and makes us truly rich in making us temperate, content, and independent. This sufficiency of disposition leaves those who are masters of it under few wants, and infallibly procures the favour of that God who can in the best manner supply them.

The craving mind is under perpetual unretreivable poverty, and how plentifully soever it may be supply'd, yet, like the bottomless pit, is never the fuller or the richer. The expensive luxury, the fashionable and grave follies of life, are continually stirring up new necessities, and consume that plentiful provision of Providence, which, if well manag'd, is sufficient to all. The true happiness of man consists not in the extent of possession, but in the restraint of desire: and they both mistake and forfeit that happiness, when they mis-spend their wishes and endeavours upon unnecessary things: their misery, want, and poverty, are not owing to the narrow care of

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our heavenly Father, but to their own undutiful and unsatisfy'd appetites; and they, by wishing for that fullness which they do not want, and probably never will obtain, become both sinners in God's sight, and miserable in their own.

In praying then for daily Bread we desire no more than the necessities of life, and in doing so speak the language of uncorrupted nature, and pure and undefiled Religion. We solicit not for the gratification of those corrupt desires, which we are by duty oblig'd to reform, but profess that *having food and raiment, we will with that be content.* This Petition shews, that nothing more than necessary things deserves the care of a Christian, and that even that care is made superfluous by an humble and religious trust in God. *Take* Mat. vi. 31. *no thought for your life, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be cloathed? for your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things.*

The second limitation of this Petition is in point of time, to this day; *Give us this Day, &c.*

The words *to day* and *to morrow* are not so strictly confined in Scripture as they are in common discourse; but they mean the two

Give us this Day

great divisions of time, present and future. The limitation of this Petition to present necessities, condemns all anxious thoughtfulness for the future. When men extend their cares to future and distant events, they forget both God and themselves; they act inconsistently with their duty as Christians, whose *reward is in Heaven*; and withal, with their station as mortals who *have here no abiding place*. Their concern for this world bears no proportion to their interest in it, and they with misspent discretion make as lasting provision for crazy bodies, as if they were assur'd that their *dwelling-places shall endure for many generations*.

The experience of humane life, as well as the Gospel, should convince them of the unreasonableness of taking too much *thought for the morrow*, since *sufficient for the day is the evil thereof*. The possessions, for which they sell both their present ease and future happiness, should be held by a more lasting tenure than humane breath, which for its uncertainty is justly compar'd to a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and cometh not again. When they are embolden'd, with the rich man in the Gospel, to say to themselves, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years*, they should have some better security

than

Jam. iv.
14.

Luke xii.
19.

than what the course of mortality can give, that *their souls shall not be requir'd of them that night*. In short, they should be more assur'd than they generally are or can be, that death (that universal leveller, that great reproach of humane cares) will not disturb them in the midst of these their mistaken wants, and bring them to judgment for too unbelieving thoughtfulness about them.

This too great foresight for worldly things is not only superfluous, but sinful; it is contrary to the meaning of this Prayer, and, as such, to the duty of a Christian. When more than the supply of present necessities is pray'd for, we ask for that which God never promis'd to give, and hath forbid us to think of. If there were but one opportunity in life of coming before him, it would then be reasonable to croud all present and future wants into one Prayer; but as he not only permits but commands us to pray daily to him, why should we ask for that to day, which we as yet do not need, and may both with more duty and success petition for to morrow? A criminal desire of independence makes men forward in the most distant cares, and sometimes undutiful in expressing them to God. If the whispers of a miser's Prayer were overheard, they are generally such as these, "Lord
" let

“ let thy bounty be as extensive not only as
 “ my wants, but as my wishes; make my
 “ possessions as large as I can grasp, and as
 “ long-liv’d as my cares; give me at once
 “ what will serve myself and my most dis-
 “ tant posterity; and grant me for this day’s
 “ Petition so much, that I may never have
 “ occasion to pray to thee any more.” Now
 this, as undutiful and unchristian as it may
 appear, is the inward language of worldly
 souls; they would be so independent in their
 condition, as not to need the Petition for
 daily Bread, and they look upon this neces-
 sity of frequent Prayer, as a severe task upon
 humane nature.

The Prayers then of a Christian for this
 world should, as his thoughts, be confin’d to
 this day. Every day produces fresh instan-
 ces of want, and he would be thankful for
 this happy necessity of more frequently com-
 ing before God. His believing confidence
 in his heavenly Father enables him to over-
 look all the distant evils of life, being assur’d
 that *his ears are ever open to his Prayers*.
 He needs not hastily to grasp at once what
 he may upon all occasions have for asking,
 since God can neither be wearied with our
 Prayers, nor exhausted of the means of an-
 swering them. The access to the throne of
 Grace,

Grace, and the plentiful streams of good from
it, being always the same, he hath, in the as-
surance of this, a plentiful provision both of
wealth and content *laid up for many years.*

To conclude: When we pray, as we do
here, for no more than present supplies, we
act the part of Wisdom and Religion: of
Wisdom, in avoiding unnecessary cares for
things, which by our mortal condition we may
never want: and of Religion, in being willing
to depend upon God's bounty for every day's
happiness.

The third limitation of this Prayer is to
measure our desires for daily Bread by our spi-
ritual condition.

Temporal conveniencies are not to be ask'd
for absolutely, but only in that measure and
proportion, as may secure our interest in the
next world. We must pray not only with con-
fidence in God's bounty, but with deference to
his wisdom, and add these dutiful conditions
to all our requests, if he shall think them fit
and reasonable. *Labour not, saith our Savi-* John vi.
our, for the meat that perisheth, but for ^{27.}
that meat that endureth to everlasting life.

As this request for worldly necessities stands
in a crowd of others for spiritual blessings, it
must in all reason be explain'd in subordina-
tion to them. We must so pray for daily Bread,

as

as not to forget that we have other wants more important than that; and that even the too full enjoyment of this may defeat the success of other petitions. Temporal things are to be ask'd for with reserve and exception; if they are serviceable to God's Name, to the promotion of his Kingdom, or the due performance of his Will; if they are not so, God is kinder in denying than in granting them.

The Prayer for daily Bread is so to be understood, as not to contradict the others taught by our Saviour; and we in using it must believe, that the denial, or at least the restraint of it, may sometimes in the consequence be as beneficial as the success. The *Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness* are to be the first care, and all other things are to be sought in such measure and degree, as they are serviceable to these. In short, we should so pray for the conveniencies of a frail mortal life, as to receive them from God's Hand with thankfulness, and to give them up with submission, and in both together imitate holy Job; *the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Job i. 21.

These are the several limitations of this petition; which being put together give a true
and

our daily Bread.

141

and full sense of the words. We, in praying for daily Bread, ask not for any superfluities, but only the mere necessities of life; we farther confine these necessities to the present, and thereby cut off all those needless and distrustful provisions for futurity; we, lastly, ask for these present supplies with a proviso, that God shall think them proper for our spiritual interest; otherwise, we profess to submit to his Providence, either in granting or refusing them.

The practical uses of this Prayer are these which follow.

First, The Prayer for daily Bread should remind us of our great dependence upon God.

Our Saviour by directing his Disciples to pray for daily Bread, doth in that inform them, that what they have hitherto enjoy'd, or henceforward expect, is from the same bountiful hand. They are taught hereby to profess, with the *Psalmist*, *the eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them their meat in due season; thou openest thine hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness.* God's goodness is neither sparing in its measure, nor partial in its distribution. The rich are not so independent, nor the poor so utterly destitute, but that both
may

may with equal humility and thankfulness acknowledge, that *the Lord is loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works.*

All the enjoyments of life, by whatsoever chanel they are convey'd, flow from the same plentiful fountain of Good. Our property of all kinds is held of the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth; the gift of it is from his bounty, and the use and enjoyment from his blessing. How successful soever either our own care, or the kindness of others may be in procuring *daily Bread*, yet these are but the low instruments, which the supreme Lord and cause of all things is pleas'd to employ for our support. He is the supreme proprietor and dispenser of all blessings, and while we value the gift, as we sometimes do too much, we should bless and praise the Giver.

This plenty of all good things, if moderately enjoy'd, and seriously reflected upon, would, instead of diverting our affections from God, really turn them to him; and the rich, if they gave themselves leisure to think, would as much exceed in duty and thankfulness, as they do in their possessions. Thus the love of this world might be made one motive to love God. If men are pleas'd with the ease of their station, and the plenty of
their

their fortunes, how should they, in the midst of their joy, look up to him, from whom alone they have the means of obtaining these comforts, and (what is more valuable) the disposition to relish them? If they respect a mortal like themselves for procuring them any one worldly conveniency, what should be their duty to their Maker, from whose favour they have all these conveniencies put together? If the tenderness of relations, and the sincerity of friends, touch them with a very sensible gratitude, how much greater do they owe to that God, who hath both dispos'd these to be their friends, and given them the capacity of appearing so? There is not one kind office which we receive in civil life, or any one reasonable pleasure which we enjoy, but, if duly apply'd, reminds us of that common support and nourishment from above.

Most certainly we expressly acknowledge this dependence upon God, in praying to him, for *daily Bread*. This Petition teaches us, how weak and insufficient men are of themselves, and how much bless'd and supported by a kind providence. They pray not in this for some one additional convenience, but for the whole support of their lives, and thereby acknowledge every moment's breath to be a repeated instance of his bounty. In short,

short, they by thus praying profess, that in God they *live, move, and have their being*; and therefore, as oft as they do so, should reflect upon that immense debt of gratitude they owe to him, and their own incapacity to discharge it.

Secondly, The Prayer for daily Bread requires all our other Prayers for worldly things to be made in very general terms.

Our Saviour, by including all the necessities of life under one article of daily Bread, teacheth us not to be circumstantial or very particular in our Prayers. We may, we ought to pray for the relief of temporal wants in general; but in what manner or proportion they should be supply'd, must be left to the unerring choice of our heavenly Father.

The design of Prayer is not to inform God of something that he knew not before, for he already knows *that we have need of all these things*; but to profess that submission, which is due from creatures to their Creator. When every trifling grievance is made the subject of Prayer, they that do so, seem either to suspect his knowledge, or to affront his Majesty. How rude would it be thought to bring in solemn decency a petition for an inconsiderable trifle to a Sovereign Prince? But yet how frequently are requests brought

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before the King of Heaven, some of which are sinful, many superfluous, and all of them either contrary to the reasonable inclinations, or below the Prayers of a Christian?

Our Saviour seems to forbid this particular recital of wants in the seventh verse: when ye pray use not vain repetitions, or rather, as the ^c Greek word signifies, *be not particular or circumstantial in your Prayers, as the heathen, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* The heathen us'd to disclose every low desire in their Prayers; and to make the Deities they pray'd to, the procurers to their pleasure, or the instruments of their revenge. Our Saviour therefore, in opposition to so corrupt a custom, sets forth this excellent Prayer, as a model of more reasonable requests in their intention, and of more general and thereby more sub-

^c The Antients generally interpreted the word βαττολογία, by a tedious and circumstantial enumeration of worldly desires. Hesych. βαττολογία ἀργολογία κὶ ἀκαιρολογία. Etymolog. πολυλογία. which sense is more particularly referr'd to in the context. βαττολογίαν ἐνταῦθα τὴν φλυασίαν λέγων ὅταν τὰ μὴ προσήκοντα αἰτῶμεν ὡς τὰ θεῶν, δυνάσεως κὶ δόξης, κὶ τὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἀειγενέας. Chrysost. in locum. Δοκεῖ δὲ τὸτο τὸ ξένον ταύτην τὴν λέξιν κακοήθειαν ἐξορμηκέναι ἐπὶ ἐλέγχῳ τῆς ἀνείας τῆς πρὸς τὰ ἀνωφελῆ κὶ μάταια ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ἀσχετομένων. Greg. Nyssen. de Orat. Dom.

missive ones in their expression. His Disciples are not presumptuously to direct how, and when, and in what degree, they would have any low grievance remov'd, but must commit their whole cause to God, and modestly leave the conduct of it to his over-ruling wisdom.

Temporal things are or are not blessings, according to the disposition of him that receives them; and are therefore to be pray'd for with so much deference, that while we desire success from his bounty, we should at the same time petition for patience from his Spirit. Few understand or pursue their true interest so uniformly, as to be always proper choosers for themselves; and it is therefore great mercy to them sometimes that they are not punish'd with the success of their own petitions. A wise heathen hath therefore observed, in a profess'd discourse ^f upon the subject, the great ignorance of mankind as to their true interest; so that their Prayers, if granted without distinction, would become their greatest curses.

It is much to be question'd, whether by the laws of the Gospel which require universal Charity, the destruction either of private

^f *Plato in Alcibiade 2.*

or publick enemies may be absolutely and unconditionally begg'd for ; because tho' peace and deliverance be proper subjects of Prayer, yet they should be sought rather in turning the hearts of enemies than in their ruin. This particular mention of our desires against them is presumptuous in respect of God, since we not only ask for deliverance, which is very reasonable ; but ask for it in the subversion of our enemies, which is unchristian and uncharitable. The cause of this kind, whether private or publick, should be committed in general terms to God, with humility and submission ; because by the continuance of our grievances many spiritual ends may be promoted, which may in their effect prove more beneficial than their hasty removal.

Our requests then for worldly necessities, like this Prayer for *daily Bread*, must be express'd so generally, that they may not seem either unnecessarily to inform God of what he knew not before, or presumptuously to direct him how he should chuse any thing to be brought about. We ought not to be so solicitous either for the thing it self, or the manner of its performance, as not to wish that *not our will, but his be done.*

Thirdly, The Prayer for daily Bread teacheth strict justice in the ways of procuring it.

He that asks of God daily Bread, desires his blessing in a lawful and upright way. Honest diligence is the only tenure by which we hold any thing of Heaven; but he who seeks support in an unlawful way, receives his hire of another master. "He hath not his daily Bread of God, saith a pious Father, who gets his living by injustice and extortion.

The rewards of unrighteousness are not the gift of a just Being, such as God is; and however they may be permitted at present, yet will certainly be punish'd hereafter. *Stollen waters, saith the wise man, are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant, but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.*

Prov. ix.
17.

He that holds up polluted hands to God for daily Bread, must think falsely either of his knowledge, or of his justice. He by this would make the righteous Judge the Father of the fatherless and the Pleader of the widow's cause, an accomplice to his oppression, and would have his thriving villany

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both encourag'd and sanctified by a blessing from above.

God's favour then being the foundation of our whole subsistence, his law, which is the law of justice and equity, is to be our rule in obtaining it. When we ask daily Bread from him, we promise to procure it in those ways by which only he is pleas'd to give it, in faithful diligence, in discreet frugality, and all the other honest methods of living. And however these reasonable arts may not instantly succeed, (as, for spiritual ends, God's time and ours may not always be the same) yet we may notwithstanding use this Petition for worldly subsistence, with the comfortable assurance that Religion gives, and the experience of human life abundantly confirms.

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure. Isa. xxxiii. 15. &c.

Lastly, This Prayer for daily Bread should direct us to great comfort and chearfulness.

The anxious cares of Life seem very much misapply'd, since we are allow'd to ask what we want of God, and are assur'd of success in asking. We pray not to one who is either limited in his power, or inconstant in his love; but to that merciful Father, whose watchful protection of his children never slumbers nor sleeps.

If we have much ease and comfort from the interest of a common friend, whose capacity to serve us is but short, and his affections, like all other mortal things, very uncertain; how rich should we think our selves in the friendship of that *Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of change?*

There could be no one more effectual remedy of (that great malady of human nature) worldly solicitude, than the assurance that the Gospel gives of an universal providence, that without this *not a sparrow falls to the ground; and that even the hairs of our head are number'd.* The affection of God to man, the noblest work of his hands, is strongly represented in his equal and uniform care of the inanimate part of the creation. *If God so cloath the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he cloath you, O ye of little faith?*

Matt. vi.
30.

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If our Saviour had commanded his Disciples to *take no thought for the morrow*, and yet hath promis'd no provision for it elsewhere: if he had requir'd them to lay aside their own cares, and not assur'd them of those of another's, *this wou'd have been a hard lesson, who cou'd bear it?* Or if farther he had only told them that their *reward was great in Heaven*, but that till they came thither they were out of the divine protection, that during this life they were utterly deserted and left to themselves; the temptation would have been too great for man, and their present despair would have wore out their future hopes.

But our Saviour, in the abundant demonstrations which he gives of God's kindness, proposeth a cure to this worldly anxiety, both sufficient for the disease, and condescending to human nature. He makes chearfulness the character of a Christian, and makes that chearfulness very practicable, in the firm persuasion of a present and sufficient protection, that they who *fear the Lord should want no manner of thing that is good*. He opposeth to the disquieting and ineffectual thoughtfulness of our own the provident good will of our heavenly Father, and gives the best reason of being anxiously careful for nothing,

in assuring us that he will give all *good things to those that ask him.*

Thus hath Religion the *promise of this life, and of that which is to come* : of the one, in the *full assurance of hope* ; and of the other, in the present comfortable belief of providence. The good man doth not, by suspending his worldly thoughtfulness, desert his interest, but really secures it ; he by this believing trust in God's help purchaseth his Almighty protection, and hath thereby more ease in the conduct of his affairs, and better success in their event. But the great misery of human life is, that they understand not their happiness in this point, they tire and torment themselves with distracting and anxious cares for this world, when they might both more dutifully and more happily cast them upon God, *who so much careth for them.*



SERMON



S E R M O N VI.

M A T T. VI. 12.

*Forgive us our Debts, as we
forgive our Debtors.*



THE parallel place in St. *Luke* is somewhat different from these words, *forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*; from whence it appears, that the Lord's Prayer in our Liturgy follows rather the sense than the words of both places; the meaning however is the same, whether we with St. *Matthew* read *forgive us our Debts*, or with St. *Luke*, *forgive us our Sins or Trespasses*. An offender against God owes his punishment, and an offender against his neighbour owes reparation and restitution; and therefore

the injuries both to God and man are properly enough call'd ^a Debts.

The parable of the unmerciful servant is a proof of this explication, where the offences of men against each other are set forth in the debt of a few pence; and those of men against God, their common master, in the immense debt of an hundred talents. The divine Author of this Prayer gives the same sense in the
 v. 14, 15. following verses. *If ye forgive men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive you your Trespases.*

It is worthy of observation, that our Saviour thought it necessary to single out this

^a The Greek of St. Matthew hath it, ἄφεες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα, and that of St. Luke τὰς ἁμαρτίας, &c. It is evident that the word ὀφείλημα is by the sacred style synonymous with ἁμαρτία; so Matt. xxiii. 16. ὀφείλεις is truly render'd reus est; so likewise Luke xiii. 4. ὀφείλεις is put for ἁμαρτωλοί. Now this new sense of the Greek word is owing to the ambiguity of the original חוב, which according to the context signifies either guilt or debt, one of which senses is follow'd by the interpreter of St. Matthew, the other by St. Luke; the one translating it literally, the other (as Grotius observes) ἐκλωικώτερον. It appears from thence reasonable, notwithstanding the difference of the Greek, to retain the common way of expression, forgive us our Trespases, &c. However, I would hereupon observe, that the improper use of several Greek words in St. Matthew are an evident proof that the present Greek of that Gospel is a translation from the Hebrew.

as we forgive our Debtors. 155

article from all the rest, and to shew, as he doth very particularly, both the necessity of obtaining forgiveness from his Father, and the terms by which we must expect to do so.

The desire of revenge was so deeply rooted in nature, so much strengthen'd by custom and prescription, and so little discountenanc'd hitherto by God's own laws to the *Jews*, that to bring men to this perfect and heavenly rule of forgiveness, there was wanting much authority in the teacher, and a very strong sense of their own interest in the practice of it. No one therefore could preach this disagreeable doctrine with more confidence than the Son of God, who himself *bore our sins, and carried our sorrows*; nor could he give a more cogent reason for obeying it, than by making the low pardon of sinners to their brother, the only condition of obtaining a more important one from God.

The Saviour of the world is truly call'd *the Prince of Peace*, since he gave the best assurances of it from God to man, and the most persuasive motives to it between one man and another; and by both promising it on one hand, and teaching it on the other, shews the true complexion of his Gospel, which is founded in mercy, and doth withal naturally promote it. The fruits of his preaching did hereby fulfil the prophetick

Ifai. ix. 6.

prophetick acclamations made at his birth, and he by establishing *peace upon earth*, brought down from Heaven *good will towards men*. Lest therefore this duty of charity should be either forgot or neglected, it is made the subject of our daily and most important Prayers, and we are reminded of the necessity of reconciliation to each other, as oft as we ask it of God for our selves.

I shall treat of the words in this method :

First, I shall set forth the limitation and exception with which we ask the pardon of our Trespases.

Secondly, Enquire into the measure and degree of that forgiveness to each other, which is made the condition of it.

And, *Thirdly*, Shew the great disproportion that there is between the pardon of men to each other, and that which they here ask of God for themselves.

First, The limitation and exception with which we ask the Pardon of our Trespases.

Now we do not in this, as in the other Petitions, ask God's favour without limitation, the request being made with a condition, extends no farther than such condition. So that those, who thus pray for the forgiveness of their Trespases, are either suppos'd to declare themselves friends with all the world,

or

as we forgive our Debtors. 157

or to renounce that pardon they themselves want for the divine mercy. They put the issue of their success upon this condition, and desire upon no other terms to be forgiven, than as they forgive others.

The Petition is such as every one may understand, and if they knew their own sinful state, should earnestly wish to have granted; but they do not attend to the condition with which they ask. They seem by their practice to think, that the forgiveness of their brethren is not so necessary but that they may be heard without it; and they vainly hope, that in asking the pardon of their sins they may unconditionally desire, that their malice and revenge may be pardon'd too. There is indeed so little of this Christian duty seen in common practice, that it is taken for a virtue of an uncommon size, for something above both the capacity and obligations of mortals; and it is not sufficiently consider'd, that they profess it in their daily Prayers.

The uncharitable and revengeful, do by these words condemn themselves out of their own mouths; and by asking pardon upon the condition of charity, for want of that charity disclaim God's mercy. Our resentments are not to be our companions when we come before God, and we must resolve to
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lose the blessing of this and all other Prayers, or we must send them up with a spirit of meekness and reconciliation. Our Saviour here sets forth the merciful tenor of his Gospel, and as that is founded in the reconciliation of all mankind; so he expects we should do that for each other, which he in a much higher degree hath done for all.

The words then are a sort of mutual stipulation and covenant between God and man; and as one part contains the Petition of what we desire him to do for us, so the other sets forth a profession of what we are ready to do for him; the Petition, with the condition annex'd to it, may justly bear this sense: "Let thy favour, O Lord, be to me
 " in proportion to my affection to my brethren;
 " blot out my sins, as I for thy sake have done their injuries: let my Prayers for
 " pardon have the same acceptance at thy
 " Tribunal, which their intreaties have had
 " with me: I am willing to be accepted or
 " rejected at the last day upon these terms,
 " and desire to meet with no more mercy
 " in the next world, than I have practis'd in
 " this." These are the professions which every Christian makes, when he asks for the forgiveness of his trespasses, and his everlasting happiness depends upon the
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as we forgive our Debtors. 159

truth and sincerity with which he makes them.

Secondly, The second particular is to shew the measure and degree of that forgiveness which is made the condition of this Prayer.

The measure of forgiveness which is here profess'd to our brethren will be best understood by that proportion of pardon which we are suppos'd to ask for our selves. We do not, in asking God forgiveness, only ask the remittance of punishment, but we go on to desire perfect friendship and reconciliation with him. We desire, in the language of the Gospel, *to be justified*; that is, to be so treated, as tho' we had been originally just, and never sinn'd at all. We, with all the demerit of sinners, yet by the merits of our Redeemer, sue for the Rewards of unspotted innocence; that thus accepted by his mercy, and sanctify'd by his Spirit, we may have *our fruit unto holiness, and the end of it everlasting life*.

As therefore we desire the benefit of this full forgiveness from God, we profess, by desiring *to be forgiven as we forgive*, to practise it in the same degree to each other. As the pardon of sins doth not consist only in the remittance of the punishment, but in blotting out the memory of them, and making

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ing us the children of Grace, so we cannot be said to have forgiven an injury, by only suspending the resolution of revenging it. We ask much more in this Petition for our selves, and therefore must be suppos'd to profess more to others.

If our professions then be answerable to this Petition (and that the rule supposes) we must not only not seek for revenge against an offending brother, but receive him with some degree of Christian kindness. We must not think, that we have perform'd the whole condition of this request for pardon, by only not returning *like for like*; but, if occasion be, by *doing good for evil, by blessing them that curse, and praying for them that despitefully use us.* A smooth carriage and a cold distance, whereby an offended neighbour seems rather not to be in war, than to be at full peace, fall very short of this rule, which requires all the latent seeds of malice and hatred to be rooted out. In short, as the forgiveness from God brings along with it a thorough reconciliation, so that is only to be obtain'd, by practising it in as full a manner to each other.

There are some who think themselves entitled to the rewards of this virtue, who have no share in the merit of it; a predominancy
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as we forgive our Debtors. 161

of flegm, a want of fire in their complection, makes them incapable of any warmth of passion, and thereby very cold either in their love of friends, or hatred of enemies.

Others want not fire for passionate resentments, but those, like fire compos'd of hasty fuel, soon expire. The revengeful resolutions without any other reason wear off with time, and, notwithstanding all their endeavours to keep them alive, expire with as much weakness as they were born. The forgiveness of enemies, which upon a Christian principle is the greatest perfection of human mind, is, in them, the disease of it, and is wholly owing to the natural levity of their tempers, which suffers them not to pursue the same thing for a long time.

But the mercy of God in Christ *Jesus* is to be both the principle and the measure of this duty, and it is the sense of this only, which can entitle those that use this Prayer to the success of it. If any other accidental cause ties up our hands, or disarms our affections, the effects of it are not to be plac'd to God's account. The only test for Christians to distinguish these false pretences from the reality is to try, whether they in their Prayers for all mankind are not inclin'd to make some revengeful exceptions, whether they can of

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their enemies become their advocates, and wish them as freely full peace and mercy from God, as they have already from themselves. If they are not only averſe to avenge their own quarrel, but are mov'd with compaſſion when others do it; if they can behold the proſperity of their forgiven neighbour without an envious regret, or his fall without an ill-natur'd joy, they then come up to the rule here laid down, and have that perfect *charity that rejoyceth not in iniquity.*

But tho' the forgivenefs, which is the condition of this Prayer, requires us to blot out the injuries of others, as entirely as tho' they had never been done; yet the offender is not for that reaſon to be taken into any other degree of friendſhip, than ſuch as is common to all Chriſtians. We are not oblig'd upon reconciliation to receive him into our confidence, unleſs we for other reaſons think him fit for it. Tho' one man forgive another for deceiving or injuring him, ye he is not oblig'd upon ſuch reconciliation to truſt him; becauſe ſuch diſtruſt may proceed not from any remains of hatred, but from a juſt precaution. The intimacy of a few with each other, is govern'd by rules very different from the common league of love among Chriſtians; ſo that when an offending brother is reſtor'd

as we forgive our Debtors. 163

to the one, it doth not follow that he should at the same time be entitled to the other.

Thus again, this measure of forgiveness doth not debar a man from recovering by law those rights, of which he is unjustly defrauded; because the distinction, which the Casuists have rightly made between *injuria* and *damnum*, shews, that one may prudently endeavour to recover a loss, without any malicious intention of returning the injury. I may farther add, that this measure of forgiveness doth not restrain the Magistrate from exercising necessary severities; because publick justice is rather arm'd against the offence than the offender, and therefore is not suppos'd to employ the sword for any narrow or malicious humour, but for the good of the publick. However it is most certain, that if malice and revenge enter into the contests of one private man with another, or into the motives of publick justice; they, who are faulty in either of these points, fall very short of the condition of that pardon which the highest as well as the lowest want, and have therefore no title to the success of this Petition.

The measure of forgiveness therefore, which is here profess'd, is not inconsistent with the reasonable prudence of civil life, or with the

maxims of private and publick justice; a private person is not oblig'd out of Christian charity to make a suspected, tho' forgiven enemy, his confident and his counsellor; nor needs he for fear of violating that charity, which is not necessarily in danger from civil contests, quit all the just and legal claims of himself and his family. Nor doth this rule likewise oblige the Magistrate in the necessary execution of publick justice, to *forgive a criminal as he hopes to be forgiven*; because such a one in his publick capacity is the *minister of God for good*; his too great lenity to some may in the consequence prove to be greater cruelty to others, and therefore the severity of a Magistrate is consistent with the charity and compassion of a Christian.

But to proceed, the rule of charity which is here laid down, tho' it restrain not private persons from the recovery of their legal rights, nor publick governors from the reasonable execution of their office, yet it requires all but this. The disposition to forgive an offending neighbour must be both true in its principle, and warm in the degree of it, and obliges us not only to lay aside the intentions of revenge, but to do him all the good offices, which one Christian by the Gospel may claim of another. To conclude,

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as we forgive our Debtors. 165

as we by asking pardon of God desire to be restor'd to his full favour; as we do not only endeavour by this Prayer to avoid Hell, but to obtain Heaven, so we should hence observe, that we promise the same degree of reconciliation to our enemies: We are to follow that excellent rule of the Apostle, *Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.* Eph. iv. 31, 32.

The third particular is to shew the great disproportion between the forgiveness we shew to each other, and that which we expect from God.

The first instance of this disproportion arises from the different aggravations of offences against each other, and those of which we are guilty before God.

There is one alleviating circumstance in the injuries of men to each other, that however human wickedness may be the immediate instrument of them, yet as to their effect and consequence, they are permitted by the superiour direction of Heaven. This was the thought of *David*, when *Shimei* curs'd him, *Let him alone, and let him curse, for the* 2 Sam. xvi. 11.

166 *Forgive us our Debts,*

Lord hath bidden him. It may be, that the Lord will look upon my affliction, and requite me good for his cursing this day. Oppressions and hardships are sometimes allotted to God's children for spiritual ends, either to punish them in a past guilt, or to prevent a future; therefore violent resentments against the low instruments of the hardships are the more unreasonable, because they are a kind of rebellion against that over-ruling providence which permitted them.

But as the injuries of men are by God's permission for our spiritual good, and should therefore be bore with more temper, so withal they are in themselves trifling and inconsiderable. The power of men only extends to hurt the body, but cannot affect our better part; so that the resentment of affronts and injuries seems to be wholly owing to a violent attachment to the things of this world. The desertion of a little interest, a diversity of opinions, the aspersions upon a good name, or probably a coldness only in espousing it, are made the common subject of the warmest animosities; and for the criminal pleasure of prosecuting these, we cheaply sell the peace of our minds, and that important pardon of sins for which we daily pray. As Christians, we profess an institution, which hath compassi-

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as we forgive our Debtors. 167

on for the foundation, and charity for the condition of it; so that the hatred of the greatest enemies should give place to our duty to our Redeemer, and to our necessary concern for our selves. *As the things of this world are not equal to the glory that shall be reveal'd*, the regard to a small part of them (and the extent of human injuries doth not often reach farther) should not tempt us to desert our duty, or to forfeit our hope.

The offences of men against each other have also this alleviating circumstance, that they are committed by equals against equals. There is nor that vast debt of ingratitude owing from one mortal to another, as to aggravate the breaches of it to any great degree. Their power of doing good, besides that it is not their own, is both narrow in its extent, and mercenary in the exercise of it; and their greatest favours (so far doth God's disinterested love of us exceed that of our selves to each other) are frequently requited, either in present interest, or future expectation.

The most revengeful therefore are not they who are most injur'd, but who are biggest in their pretensions, and think they have a claim of some service from all about them. They put a greater value upon their favours, than truth or common practice will justify; and

168 *Forgive us our Debts,*

whatever either in manners, or gratitude, falls below the standard they set, they proclaim themselves injured and affronted. The injuries which are the most destructive to our interest, are found by experience not to be the most provoking; and a few expressions of contempt generally raise a warmer and more lasting resentment, than any other breach of friendship. We need no other proof of the great guilt of revenge, than that it is pursu'd for such reasons as men are asham'd to own; and they must necessarily take the vengeance into their own hands, because it is rais'd by so low pretences, that they are well assur'd that *it belongs not to God.*

Again; The injuries of men to each other are not only weak in their effects, and trifling in the aggravations of them, as being done amongst equals, but they are also few in number. Neither their power nor the will of offenders is extended to that degree as to multiply many injuries, without provocation, to one person. Their inclination to mischief is satiated, or their capacity for it exhausted, in a few Trespasses, and then they are willing to be at peace. There are few who have occasion, without their own fault, to come to St. Peter's question, *How often shall my brother offend, even to seven times, and I forgive*

as we forgive our Debtors. 169

forgive him? But if their own patience will hold out, the malice of the offender, if not refresh'd by new provocation, seems sooner satisfy'd.

But if we go on to take a view of those offences, of which we are guilty before God, and for whose remission we daily pray, they will appear both in guilt and number to exceed any injuries of men to each other. What ties are there of gratitude to a friend, or dependence upon a sovereign, which are not broke in every wilful sin against God? What proportion is there between the injuries done by men to their equals, and those committed against the Majesty of Heaven, against the will of him, *in whom we live, move, and have our being?* How different must be the violations of faith and gratitude to mortals, as weak and dependent as our selves, and those which are done to our heavenly Father, who hath given us all that we have or hope for?

If sinners (and such more or less are all mankind) would turn their eyes upon themselves, the want which they there find of pardon would make them the more ready to give it. If they find reason to complain of the narrow gratitude and uncertain friendship of others, let them consider how short and de-

ficient they are in these points to their Maker; if their patience be worn out with a few injuries, let them reflect upon the much greater number of their own, by which God *is provoked every day*. If the Judge of the world *were extreme, to mark what is done amiss, who could abide it? But as there is forgiveness with him*, the sense and expectation of that should reconcile us to each other. The charity which we shew to men is, upon comparison, as differing from the mercy we for that reason expect from God, as Earth is from Heaven; and the pardon of the most offending neighbour is a cheap price for that important forgiveness of our own more numerous and heinous offences. *One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy to a man that is like himself, and doth he ask forgiveness for his own sins? If he that is but flesh nourish hatred, who will intreat for pardon of his sin?*

Ecclus.
xxviii. 3,
4, 5.

The second instance of the great disproportion of our own forgiveness to that from God, appears from the different methods of reparation.

The Trespases of men to each other being committed against craving and indigent equals, they can easily purchase their peace by a just
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as we forgive our Debtors. 171

reparation. They can sometimes repair the injury to great advantage in its own kind, and probably would not fail to do it, if engag'd by forbearance and condescension on the other side. They can make a sufficient amends for past affronts by future civility; for defamation by discouraging and contradicting all former unjust reports; and for wrongs and oppression, by restitution.

But where the means of reparation are wanting, (as they are not often) yet they are sometimes abundantly supply'd in only asking pardon; the readiness to forgive doth not only make a man one enemy less, but one friend more. He becomes from that time, by a cheap and easy conquest, (for such are all the conquests of mercy) the master of his offending brother's heart, and gains more advantage by this pardon than he sustain'd of damage by the injury. The *rendering evil for evil* gives his enemy both more power and more will to hurt him, while his mercy becomes his guard and his protector. Such a one gains doubly by doing his duty; first, by disarming the hatred of his enemy, and then by the respect and applause which the moderate exercise of his power will give him. Experience will here confirm the wise man's observation, that the *discretion of a man de-* Prov. xix.
ferreth ^{11.}

172 *Forgive us our Debts,*

ferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. The practice of forgiveness therefore is not a service so lean and uncomfortable as is generally thought; and as it is always our duty, so it seldom so happens, but it is our interest to gain over an enemy by kindness and condescension.

Those are the methods of reparation from one man to another, but what power have they of making any such satisfaction to God? What proper requital can they make him for the violation of his laws, and the lasting reproach they have, by their disorders, brought upon *that holy name by which they are call'd?*

Most certainly sinful mortals cannot, by any power or merit of their own, make sufficient reparation to an offended God. Their requests for pardon have in themselves no more title to be heard and accepted, than the petitions of a rebel to his injur'd Sovereign: and their future cares cannot be said truly and properly to make up what was wanting before, since all they can do is still but duty, and they at best are only *unprofitable servants*. Repentance, which is the only method of reconciliation to God, cannot be call'd a sufficient satisfaction, because it is rather a caution for the future, than amends for what is past;

as we forgive our Debtors. 173

past; and tho' he is pleas'd to admit of this condition of pardon, yet this is not from any real merit in the action itself, but from his undeserved goodness in accepting it.

God doth notwithstanding this our insufficiency grant us forgiveness of our sins, but his love in Christ *Jesus* is the only foundation of it, and our Prayers and endeavours for it are accepted in and through him. We have no other hope of being reconcil'd but by the terms of our redemption, and that redemption is the contrivance of his mercy and the gift of his love. In short, we are capable of making reparation for injuries to each other, but can make none for those against God: which farther shews the different forgiveness which he mercifully grants to us, and that which we shew to each other.

Thirdly, This disproportion of God's forgiveness and ours appears from the grounds of it.

The pardon of God to men, and that of men to each other, is different in this respect, that they are oblig'd to it by the strictest ties of duty and interest; whereas he hath no other reason for it than his own goodness and compassion. The reconciliation to an enemy is very often in common life an expression of great wisdom, and, if we
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were to look no farther than this world, *have already its reward*. The wise man sells not his revenge for nothing, and, by parting with a lean, fruitless, unprofitable passion, purchaseth to himself much esteem and security.

But howsoever this disposition to peace may seem to want the wisdom of this world, it most certainly hath that of the other. The Christian reason for forgiveness of Trespases is founded in the will of God, who commanded, and hath right to exact what obedience he pleaseth. This is the sole condition of that merciful Covenant, by which we are intituled to eternal happiness. We have many and grievous sins of our own, the punishment of which is dreadful ; and we have no other way of obtaining their pardon, than by being reconcil'd to our offended brethren. We must forgive, if we will be forgiven ; and

Matt. vii.
2. *with the same measure with which we mete, it will be measured to us again.*

Our neighbour hath injur'd us in some possession, and the Lord of all the earth, who hath given us that and every thing besides, requires us for his sake to remit the injury. He sets against our charity his own much greater condescension, and, for reconciliation with our brethren, he promiseth eternal peace with

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as we forgive our Debtors. 175

with himself. He doth in truth out-bid all the low temptations to revenge, and makes this reasonable goodness the wisest instance of concern for our selves. How reasonable and necessary is forgiveness from Christians to each other, when the Judge of all men, upon whose pleasure their whole welfare depends, is himself the intercessor, and the pardon of their own sins the price and reward of it? We forgive an offender, not for his own sake, but God's, or more truly for our own, since we are to expect no mercy, except we shew it.

These are the motives of mens forgiveness to each other; but how different are they from those for which God is pleas'd to be reconcil'd to them? They forgive, because it is both their duty and interest to be merciful; but he doth it from no influence of this sort, but only from his own undeserved compassion. They *forgive others their trespasses*, because they purchase by that a more valuable pardon for themselves; but our heavenly Father hath no other end in these his stipulations, but to make both parties eternally happy. The disproportion of our forgiveness and that of God is very great as to the grounds of it, since we, as a pious Father
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176 *Forgive us our Debts,*

well observes ^b, practise it out of necessity, whereas he doth it out of both unmerited and disinterested goodness.

Upon the whole, there is no comparison between the charity of Men and the mercy of God in their different forgiveness of Trespases. If we view this pardon in the nature of the offence, those against men are concern'd in trifling affairs amongst a few equals, independent of each other, for their being and happiness; those against God are a grievous complication of rebellion against our Maker, and ingratitude to our best friend: if we consider this pardon in the means of reparation, the injuries of men may be repair'd in their own kind; and if there be no means for that, yet a wise man will receive abundant interest for his reconciliation, in gaining an enemy. But what requital can we make to God for our several sins of omission and commission, when our most diligent and most successful performances are still duty, and no more than we are oblig'd to do?

Lastly, If we compare this forgiveness in the different grounds of it, the disproportion

^b Καὶ ἀφ᾽ ἧς τῷ συνδύλῳ, καὶ παρ' ἐμῶν τῇ αὐτῆς τούτῃ χάριτι· καὶ τοιγὰρ ἐκ ἴσον τῷτο ἐκείνῳ· σὺ μὲν γὰρ δεόμενος ἀφίης, ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῷ δέλῳ, σὺ μὲν ὑποσώθῃς ὡς μυρίοις κακοῖς, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀναμάρτητος ὢν. Chrysost. in locum.

will

as we forgive our Debtors. 177

will still appear the greater. A Christian forgives his neighbour, because he by that obtains his own reconciliation; but God hath no other design either in forgiving us, or in requiring us for his sake to forgive others, than the common happiness of both parties. In short, the reconciliation of Christians to their offending brethren is the effect of prudent care for themselves, but that of our heavenly Father to us the work of his hands, and the children of his love, is owing to his own unspeakable love and compassion.

I shall make two practical observations from the foregoing doctrine; the one being made from the Petition it self, the other from the condition of it.

First, This Petition for forgiveness of Trespases being appointed to be us'd by all without distinction, shews that all are sinners.

This reminds us of the general depravation which is more or less in all mankind; so that how perfect soever some may appear or think themselves in comparison with others, yet they in their Redeemer's account have need to ask the pardon of their sins. Christianity doth not suppose its professors free from all sins, since, as St. *John* observes, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; but the

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merciful Covenant of the Gospel provides a remedy against the guilt and malignity of them. This is the observation that was generally made by the ^c antient Fathers from this Prayer; which being never us'd but by the faithful, already both in the Communion and Peace of the Church, shew'd to them the necessity of repentance and pardon even in a regenerate state; and that a Christian hath reason, as well as others, to say, *forgive us our Trespases.*

Rom. iii.
23.

But it is unnecessary to be large in the proof of this mortifying argument, since St. *Paul* assures us (and experience doth but too much confirm the truth of it) that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Not to mention their flagrant sins, which cannot escape their notice, tho' they

^c Ne quis sibi quasi innocens placeat, cum innocens nemo fit & se extollendo plus peccat, instruitur & docetur peccare se quotidie, dum pro peccatis quotidie jubetur orare. *Cypr. de Oratione.* Per hanc enim nobis voluit salvator ostendere quantumlibet justè in hujus vitæ caligine atque infirmitate vivamus, non nobis deesse peccata pro quibus dimittendis debemus orare, & eis qui in nos peccant, ut & nobis ignoscatur, ignoscere. *Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. 21.* This article of the Lord's Prayer was made use of by the orthodox Fathers as an unanswerable argument against the Pelagians, who pretended to an unsinning obedience by the perfection of their own wills. Vide Aug. contra Pelag. lib. 3.

as we forgive our Debtors. 179

do their repentance, how many secret sins will appear upon a faithful examination of their own hearts? Let them but compute their unbelieving cares and anxiety for this world, the coldness of their taste for spiritual things, their indiscreet violence for trifles, their omissions in many duties, and their imperfections in all, let them but consider these, and they will scarce add to this condemning account the much more dangerous sins of confidence and presumption.

The best men have reason, notwithstanding their apparent goodness, to humble themselves before God, and with earnestness and contrition to beg for the pardon of their Trespases. No perfections of any kind can exempt them from the necessity either of asking pardon from God, or giving it to their offending brother; and how well provided soever they may think themselves for judgment, yet they should desire to be enabled by Prayers and Charity to meet their Judge in peace and reconciliation. This stipulation of *forgiving as we would be forgiven*, if consider'd seriously, will appear favourable to Saints as well as sinners; and there is no one upon earth that may not joyn in *David's Prayer*, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be* ^{Ps. cxliii.} ^{2.}

180 *Forgive us our Debts,*

justify'd. In short, as our Saviour hath here taught all his followers to pray for the forgiveness of their Trespases, so it follows, that all, that so pray, must own that they are sinners in his sight; and therefore if they desire his pardon, they must, by meekness and charity to their offending brethren, seek for it.

The second practical observation upon the words may be made from the condition with which we pray.

The forgiveness of others, being made the only method of obtaining our own from God, shews the near relation of this forgiving temper to Christianity. The new Covenant, into which Christians are enter'd by the Gospel, is founded in this, that *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their former trespasses to them.* The attonement therefore of our sins by a Redeemer, and the hopes that attonement brings along with it, distinguish the disciples of Christ *Jesus*, as such, from all others.

2 Cor. v.
19.

But yet this foundation of the Christian Covenant, this attonement of our sins, this character of our profession, is not otherwise applicable to us, than as we perform that charity, which is the condition of it. We
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as we forgive our Debtors. 181

are not permitted to pray for these fruits of our redemption upon any other terms, and have no promise of being heard, when we desire the forgiveness of our Trespases, but *as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

There is no one act of Religion that we do as Christians, that doth not abundantly remind us of the necessity of this duty. When we praise God for the redemption by our Saviour, it is for that extensive redemption to which our offending brother is as much entitled as our selves; for that unspeakable compassion by which we, when *enemies*, were reconciled by the death of his Son; and for that instructive Gospel, the chief precept of which is forgiveness of each other. When we commemorate his love in the holy Sacrament, we are there reminded that we are *all one bread, and one body.* Lastly, 1 Cor. x. When we perform the main part of our profession, in begging a share of that pardon God hath by his Son seal'd to all mankind, we can only do so, to purpose, by professing as we do in this Prayer, perfect peace and reconciliation with all our brethren.

By this, saith our Saviour, shall all men John xiii.
know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have 35.
love one to another; and therefore he seems by this character to have founded that near

relation between all his followers, that the word *brother*, in the whole New Testament, means only a fellow Christian. The forgiveness of enemies is peculiar to the Christian Covenant, because no other institution could be qualify'd either to set forth so much of God's love to man, or to require so much love from men to each other. The Gospel, that by informing us of our sinful state, shew'd the necessity of a pardon, and by the blessed fruits of that pardon in reversion gave so much reason to desire it, proves most effectually the necessity of this charity; since this condition of present ease and future happiness cannot be obtain'd of God, who can only give it, without reconciliation to each other.

It is no wonder that we meet with no precepts of this duty in the old philosophers, because the sense of our own sinful state, and the assurance of being deliver'd from it by forgiving others their Trespases, (neither of which is discoverable by natural light) could only make the practice of it reasonable. *Cicero* therefore, in the^d best parts of his works, declares very positively for the retaliation of injuries; and *Seneca*, who pursu'd the subject farthest, doth it too much with the air of a

^d Lib. de Offic.

as we forgive our Debtors. 183

Stoick to be useful; his whole reasoning upon it seems rather to prove (what no man upon earth can be brought to believe) that there can be no injuries, than to press the necessity of forgiving them.

It is farther observable, that there was great indulgence given to revenge by the old law, as appears not only from the express permission of retaliation, but from the vehement imprecations against enemies, that are us'd by the best men.

There hath been much needless pains spent to justify the conduct of *David* and others in this point, but the only excuse that needs to be made for them is, that they were not yet acquainted with this perfect rule, and that a suffering Redeemer was only qualify'd to teach men the forgiveness of their enemies; the examples of these great and good men shew how much the Gospel did *fulfil both the law and the prophets*, since they, as perfect as they then appear'd to be, fell short of the common character of our Saviour's Disciples, and *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than they*.

To conclude; the forgiveness of each other is not so much a distinct precept of the Gospel, as one universal condition that runs thro' the whole frame of it; it is indeed peculiar

184 *Forgive us our Debts,*

to this institution, because that only could give a just reason for its practice; nor could it have us'd an argument more obvious to all capacities, and more affecting to all dispositions, than to let them know that they must only expect mercy by shewing it, *and must forgive if they will be forgiven.*

As then forgiveness of Trespasses is the most important wish that mortals can offer up, or a merciful God grant; so should it be sent up with that forgiving disposition, that it both calls for and deserves. The condition with which we here pray (and without that condition we are not to pray) should remind us of that necessary debt of reconciliation, that is always owing, but at that time more especially to be perform'd to all mankind. We here profess those terms upon which we are content to be judg'd at the last day, and therefore, as oft as we come before God with hatred and revenge, we so often condemn our selves out of our own mouth.

How justly may God answer him, who with a revengeful heart prays to him for the pardon of his sins? "Canst thou presumptuously ask of me that mercy that thou thyself never practis'd, for my sake, to thy offending neighbour? Dost thou expect to be forgiven, by me, many talents, when
" my

as we forgive our Debtors. 185

“ my interest with thee could never procure
“ the remission of a few pence? Shall he,
“ whom I have recommended to thy chari-
“ ty, be by thy unforgiving temper in bonds
“ and affliction, and shalt thou in the mean
“ time come in peace and confidence into
“ my presence? Can thy petitions have a
“ favourable acceptance at my tribunal,
“ when they are deafen’d by the loud and
“ just complaints of thy oppress’d neigh-
“ bour? My sentence therefore shall be go-
“ vern’d by thy own behaviour; and ex-
“ pect it from me, in mercy, or vengeance,
“ as thou hast practis’d either of these to-
“ wards him^e.

These certainly will, and most justly may, be the answers of God to a revengeful unforgiving petitioner. All acts of uncharitable violence are so many appeals against mercy; they add to the number of his sins, and stop the acceptance of those Prayers that should beg for their pardon. The relation that our enemy bears to our Saviour and our selves, should over-bear all temptations to passion and bitterness; and as we would hope that his intercession at God’s right hand

^e Vide Greg. Nyssen. de Orat. Dom.

should

186 *Forgive us our Debts, &c.*

should be effectual for us, so should we be willing, that this same intercessor should have influence over us for our brethren.

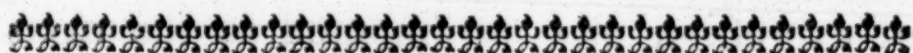
To conclude: Let us think, that as there can be no one want more pressing than that of reconciliation with our heavenly Father, so there cannot be a more reasonable condition of its supply than our own reconciliation with each other: let us remember, that as this is the tenor of the Christian Covenant, so is it withal what we daily profess, in desiring God to *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*



SERMON



S E R M O N VII.



M A T T. VI. 13.

Lead us not into Temptation.



OUR Saviour directed his Disciples, in the foregoing Petition, to avoid the guilt and punishment of their past sins, and in this teacheth them to prevent their danger for the future; in the former they ask forgiveness from God's mercy; in the latter protection from his providence, and assisting grace from his Spirit.

It is observable, that the prevention of Temptations naturally follows the request for forgiveness of Trespases, and very much strengthens the success of it; for what can be a more favourable plea for pardon than the desires

188 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

desires we here express for perseverance ; and what can more effectually shew the value we set upon God's favour, than by avoiding Temptations never to run the hazard of forfeiting it ?

Some of the Antients, ^a instead of saying *lead us not into Temptation*, us'd to express themselves somewhat more softly, *suffer us not to be led into Temptation* ; this difference of expression may be imputed to the excusable mistake, that Temptations were in their nature sinful, and therefore the desire not to be led into them suppos'd God to be the author of them ; they therefore chose to express themselves so, that they might rather appear the effects of his permission than his appointment. But as Temptations are in themselves indifferent, and only become sinful by humane weakness, we very reasonably stick to the more common and truer reading, *lead us not into Temptation*.

^a St. Matthew and St. Luke agree in reading *μὴ εἰσενέγκης ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν* which the vulgar Latin truly renders, *nè nos inducas in tentationem*. However, St. Cyprian de Orat. and Ambrose de Sacram. lib. 6. read it otherwise, & *nè patiaris nos induci in tentationem*. And it is probable that the Latin Church follow'd that way of expression in the Liturgies ; however there seems to be no other reason for this variation, but the unnecessary fear of making God from hence the author of evil.

Lead us not into Temptation. 189

In which request three things are to be consider'd.

First, The nature of Temptations.

Secondly, What it is we ask of God in praying not to be led into them.

Thirdly, How far this Prayer is assur'd of success.

First, The nature of Temptations.

Temptations are properly the several trials of human virtue. Common custom hath given this name more peculiarly to the trials of adversity, since, as the wise man observes, *Gold* Ecclus. ii. *is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in* ^{5.} *the furnace of adversity.* This condition of life more especially tries our trust in a good providence, and hath, according to our behaviour in it, this different effect, either of hardening our hearts, or of bringing them nearer to God. The word is us'd frequently in this sense throughout the New Testament. *Ye are they*, saith our Saviour to his Disciples, *that have continu'd with me in my* Luke xxii. 28. *Temptations*; meaning by them his poverty and distresses. Thus St. James adviseth the Christians, *To count it all joy when they fall* James i. 2. *into diverse Temptations, and pronounces* Ibid. 12. *the man blessed that endureth them.* Which common way of explication gave reason to translate the words in some of the old versions^b,

190 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

sions^b, *Lead us not into the Temptations of affliction.*

However the word is not so confin'd to the trials of adversity, as not to represent any other condition of life, by which our faithfulness to God may be try'd. St. *Paul* therefore applies the word to that danger, that arises from wealth and plenty. *They that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.* Trials are not so singular to a state of affliction, but that they may be as great and fatal in prosperity; our ease may be as dangerous as suffering; and as the one may tempt us to distrust providence, so the other may lead us with an ungrateful sloath to forget it. Temptations are therefore by our Church divided into those of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; which division evidently shews, that they are as applicable to one condition of life, as another.

It is observable, that there is not a station in life, nor a passion in humane nature, that doth not bring men under the danger of Temptations. Our virtue is on the opposite side to inclinations, and the business of it is, like that of a severe tutor, to curb and restrain

^b Vide Polyglot.

them.

Lead us not into Temptation. 191

them. We are plac'd in a plentiful scene of dangerous pleasures, which nature prompts us to enjoy, and duty commands us to avoid; so that the reasonable part of the man is employ'd in forbidding, what the sensual part of him is eager to embrace.

This war then between flesh and spirit, makes life to a good Christian a continu'd conflict, and all the trials of it are but one love of the present in different shapes. The world tempts the young man with trifles, and the old with graver and more manly follies, and hath a suitable bait prepar'd for every age. The old sinner in the exit of life pursues the same road he did at the entrance into it; the same sinful love of the present continues to be his companion and his guide; it tempted him in his youth by lusts and pleasures, and still doth so in his old age, by greediness and ambition. If fear be predominant in our complexions, our watchful enemy never fails to attack us at this unguarded quarter; our danger then comes arm'd with terror, and makes us ready to surrender our conscience for our safety. But yet desire is in some more prevalent than their fear; and tho' they have too much courage to be affrighted from their duty, yet they have not prudence enough to avoid being deluded out of it.

192 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

it. That passion of shame, which is owing only to a desire of other peoples good opinion, subjects some to very fatal trials; when a mistaken and cowardly complaisance (the common effect of this passion) leads them against their judgment into modish and fashionable vices, and persuades them in deference to these to *deny their Saviour before men.*

But Temptations are not so peculiar to the world, but that they pursue men into retirement and solitude. This, tho' the more ready road to perfection, is not without thorns and briars, and they find an enemy in their closest recesses, which becomes the more dangerous, because less expected and perceiv'd. Tho' they have *escap'd the pollutions of the world through lusts*, yet they are still expos'd to spiritual vices, and must expect to contend with the presumptuous confidence of their own attainments, and the uncharitable contempt of others. They are not so much safer in this distance from the world, and greater opportunities of Religion, but notwithstanding these, they may, without great care of their own and God's blessing, fall into despondency on the one hand, or presumption on the other.

Lead us not into Temptation. 193

From this general opposition of Religion to nature in every station and complexion, we may observe two things; the one, that the life of a Christian is a station of difficulties, and is for that reason ^c frequently and significantly call'd a *warfare*; the other, that we cannot be suppos'd in this Petition to pray for an absolute freedom from Temptations, because the condition of human nature, * as St. *Jerom* observes, supposeth men to be always expos'd to them in one way or other. The struggle is to be as lasting as the continuance here, and they must part with that and their breath together. They cannot consistently pray to be wholly discharg'd from the conflicts of Flesh and Spirit, but for strength and perseverance under them. They more properly pray against that increase of Temptations, which is not so much the general condition of nature, as the effect of their own sloth.

^c *Job* vii. 1. 2 *Cor.* x. 4. 1 *Tim.* i. 18.

* Difficile est, quin potius impossibile, perturbationis initio carere quempiam, quas significantius Græci *προπαθείας* vocant, nos ut verbum vertamus è verbo *antepassiones* possumus dicere, eò quòd incentiva vitiorum omnium titillent animos, & quasi in meditullio nostrum iudicium sit, vel abjicere cogitata vel recipere. *Hieronym.* ad *Salvinam*, de virginitate.

194 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

As a diligent watchfulness keeps an even balance between Religion and Nature, so the least remission of this watchfulness gives advantage to the side of Temptation. Their negligence makes them traitors to their own interest, and persuades them to admit a dangerous enemy into their quarters, that can only be oppos'd at a distance. God hath supply'd every one with a due measure of strength, but when that is not employ'd (as sloth frequently ties up the strong man's hands) then every little desire becomes a Temptation, and every Temptation a sin.

Matt.
xxvi. 41.

But Temptations do not only signify those additional trials that proceed from our own negligence, but likewise those that arise from the publick state of Religion. Our Saviour seems more especially to regard this sense of the word, when he orders his Disciples to *watch and pray, that they enter not into Temptation*. They were about to profess a Gospel contrary to the maxims and interests of the world, and must of course for that reason be tempted with all the hardships that malice could contrive, or violence execute. They must therefore pray either to avoid the severe persecutions which would arise from hence; or that, if they did come, they might not be tempted by them to desert their Master.

Lead us not into Temptation. 195

ster. But as the Gospel is now as opposite to the world as it was then, and may by the circumstances of affairs subject the present professors of it to as great danger as the first disciples, the Petition even in this sense is suited to all ages of the Church militant.

In short, in praying *not to be lead into Temptation*^d we desire not to be absolutely freed from that reluctance of flesh against the spirit, which is more or less the condition of human nature whilst on earth; but from those additional trials that surprize, forgetfulness, or the publick affairs may bring upon us more at one time than another. We suppose that Temptations may overtake us, but we desire that they may *be such as are common to men*, such as we may have either *means to escape*, or virtue to go through. The Petition is not the effect of sloth, but a wise provision for our safety, and we thereby only desire to be discharg'd from such trials, as make our perseverance not only difficult but doubtful.

^d Διόπερ δυχόμεθα ῥυθίῳαι πειρασίῃς, ἕκ ἐν τῷ μὴ πειράζεσθαι (τῆτο γὰρ ἀμύχανον μάλιστα τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς) ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ μὴ ἡττῶσθαι πειραζομένοις. *Origenes de Orat.* Non erga hic oratur ut non tentemur, sed ut non in'eramur in tentationem, tanquam si quispiam, cui necesse est igne examinari, non oret ut igne non contingatur, sed ut non exuratur. *D. Aug. Ep.*

196 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

Secondly, I am to shew what we particularly ask of God, in desiring him not to lead us into Temptations.

The words seem at first sight to make God the author of all our Temptations. And the *Calvinists*, not understanding the force of the expression, have taken from hence occasion to charge him with the concurrence to wicked actions. They suppose some absolute decrees, by which the Sovereign Lord of the world is oblig'd to direct his designs, and that he plunges the sinner deeper in his guilt, that he may hereafter vindicate the severity of his punishment. Our reason, tho' Religion were silent, would shew the wildness of this doctrine, that subjects the freedom of a reasonable will to irresistible Fate, and chargeth the righteous Judge of all the earth with the crimes of mortals.

Ch. i. 13. However, St. *James* is very clear in this matter ; *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man.* Temptations are not the effect of God's appointment, tho' they are of his permission; and we in this Prayer do not deprecate his violence, but implore his protection. As we are brought into trials by that particular station of life, in which God hath plac'd us; or by our own carelessness, which he is pleas'd to permit;

Lead us not into Temptation. 197

permit; or lastly for want of a greater measure of his Spirit; he may be said to lead us into Temptation, by suffering us to fall into it by one or other of these ways; and therefore we in so many senses desire his favour.

First then, we by this Petition desire the blessing of God's Providence.

We here desire a merciful God so to order our external affairs, that no difficulties in them may tempt us to distrust, or to forfeit his goodness. He being the supreme Governor of the world, the good is by his blessing, and the bad by his permission; the Prophet seems to refer to this over-ruling disposal, when he saith, *I the Lord form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.* No settlement of condition, or caution of their own about it, can exempt mortals from the vicissitude of affairs, and the trials of it; but they must ask the exemption from both, only of him *who doth whatsoever pleaseth him in Heaven and in Earth.* Isai. lxxv. 7.

Now tho' the petition, when confin'd to this sense, respects only temporal circumstances, yet as these in consequence may affect our spiritual state, they are the proper subject of a Christian's Prayers.

198 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

It is very easy for men to retain their faithfulness, when they *serve not God for nothing*, and are paid in hand for their service with immediate prosperity. There is no great merit in blessing the divine bounty, while it is actually showering down favours; but to *receive evil as well as good* from the same hand, *to kiss with chearfulness and patience the rod that smites*; this it is that tries and proves their sincerity. The man at full ease is no more try'd by his station than the skilful sailor is by a calm sea and good weather; but storms and adverse winds most effectually prove his skill and his courage. When men are press'd by misfortunes, they are ready, if not very sincere, to desert and repent of their virtue, and to say with the *Psalmist*, *Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency*. Every worldly thing they tenderly value may thus become the matter of their trial, and may, according to their behaviour, be the snare or the approver of their faithfulness, when *he that gave* is pleas'd to take it away.

It is the method of providence so to dispose affairs, that men may be try'd at some time or other in their most tender parts. If they set their hearts upon wealth, they are exercis'd by its uncertainty and losses; if upon friends,
by

Pf. lxxiii.
13.

Lead us not into Temptation. 199

by unfaithfulness or mortality ; if upon fame, by disgraces and disappointments. Those that can hold out against such trials as these, are not yet without farther proof, and must *take up their cross, and follow their Saviour*. A wise providence doth so dispose affairs, that the best of his servants are set in the front of danger, and, like their suffering Redeemer, must drink deeply of the bitter cup. The general state of the Church, or every man's private condition, expose some to more temptations than others, but all to some.

As then these proceed sometimes from the external conduct of affairs, which are God's province ; we desire him in mercy so to dispose them, that we may not be too severely try'd. We profess that there are some tender parts (as such there are in the best of men) wherein we may possibly give way, and therefore would not be expos'd to the enemy in that quarter. In short, human will and power are bounded, and tho' they may hold out in lesser tryals, may fail in greater, and therefore we desire him *who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust*, to suit our station to our strength, and *not suffer us to be tempted in it above what we are able*.

Secondly, We in this petition desire God to excite our own care and watchfulness.

200 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

How free soever men, by the blessing of God's providence, may be from trials in their outward condition, yet they themselves encrease and multiply them by their own criminal negligence. They have therefore reason to pray to be delivered from themselves, and that God would not suffer their religious cares to sleep. Our Saviour, the most innocent example of temptations, and the best judge of their cure, gave this advice to his disciples, *to watch and pray, that they might not enter into them; the spirit being willing, but the flesh weak.*

Matt
xxvi. 41.

Watchfulness, tho' the most effectual remedy against these infirmities, yet of all others is the least employ'd in the conduct of human life. Men generally employ not near so much wisdom in Religion as they do in the world; and there is not a trifling danger of their bodies that takes not up more care than the more important one of their souls. The Apostle advises to *put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand*; but they either care not whether they stand or no, or presumptuously hope to do so without any preparation for their defence. They keep the viper in their bosom constantly warm, and the least addition of heat more will enable it to sting them. *Every man, saith the Apostle, is tempted, when he is drawn aside by his own lust, and enticed.*

Ephes. vi.
11.

James i.
14.

As

Lead us not into Temptation. 201

As difficult as our duty is, it is made much more so by our own negligence; and our lawful desires, when pursu'd too constantly or too vehemently, both encrease the strength of our enemy, and lessen our own power to oppose him. We charge God foolishly with those trials we bring upon our selves, and when we are perpetually playing with the bait, we must blame only our selves when we swallow it.

The way then to prevent temptations is with a religious foresight to guard against their most distant approach. Our impure lusts and passions are to be check'd in their infancy; but they that negligently suffer them to thrive and grow up, either mistake their strength, or forget their danger. If they would be safe, they should watch every advance of the growing evil, and should think their cares both unseasonable and ineffectual, when they begin not till the wicked desire is become familiar.

Watchfulness then is the best method to prevent these infirmities, and the capacity of it is that blessing which is ask'd of God in this Petition. We must so watch as to remember, *that except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* This awakening sense of our danger, this readiness against the first alarm of every wicked desire.

Pf. cxxvii.

I.

202 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

is, and ought to be humbly acknowledg'd so, the effect of God's blessing. The cautiousness of running into temptation seems from the context to be that *Wisdom* which St. James directs every one to ask of God; he observes James i. 5. in the same place, that *every good and perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of lights*; and if so, then most certainly this necessary caution against our spiritual enemy. We can only be safe in perpetually fearing and providing against our danger; but this fear and foresight are not the single works of nature, but the blessing of him who promiseth Ps. xxxvii. 23. *to order a good man's goings, and to make his way acceptable unto himself.*

Thirdly, We ask of God in this Petition that assistance of his Holy Spirit that may enable us to go through Temptations.

We first pray for religious wisdom to prevent Temptations, and our next care is for perseverance under them. These, notwithstanding our Prayers against them, are sometimes permitted by a wise God, and we therefore ask him, in whose power only it is, to *strengthen us with might, through his Spirit in the inner man.*

The history of our Saviour, *who was in all things tempted like to us, sin only excepted*, gives abundant proof that none of his followers

Lead us not into Temptation. 203

followers shall without trials and conflicts finish their course. And as we from his instructive example are taught the common infirmity of nature, so are we from the same inform'd whence to have a remedy, for in *that he suffer'd being tempted, he is able* Heb.ii.18. *to succour those that are tempted.* This portion of trials in some kind or other is what every one must expect during this state of mortality. Whoever expects not to be tempted forgets his condition; and if he hope to stand singly by himself in it, he mistakes his strength. There is no greater enemy to perseverance than presumption, men being the most likely to fall, when they think the least of it. They must expect success in their conflicts with the flesh and the world upon no other terms, than dependence upon that good *Spirit that helpeth our infirmities.* This is that Spirit that must *give us both to will and to do,* and we must only hope (and a sufficient and encouraging hope it is) to be strong by his assistance, and wise by his direction.

There is no judgment more false in its principle, or more fatal in its consequence, than that, which we presumptuously make of human power distinctly from God's assisting grace. Our absent danger, like objects at a distance, appears little and contemptible,
and

204 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

and by increasing its dimensions, the nearer it approaches, becomes at length insupportable. We compute our future safety by our present ease, and our own ill understanding or short memory is the best ground of security. We, like *St. Peter*, whilst our Master is safe by our side, and no danger of confessing him appears, can, with a sanguine confidence, promise *to follow him even to the death*; but as soon as he is fallen into the hands of the high-priests and elders, we renounce these professions with as much vehemence as they were made; and for want of computing our strength, or supplying it from above, we are easily tempted to deny our Master. Thus we become the most weak and defenceless when we think our selves least so; and our unthankful confidence both disarms our own cares, and prevents that effectual assistance we should ask from Heaven.

2 Cor. xii.
10.

The best security to a Christian is his humility, as *St. Paul* observes in his own case, when *I am weak then am I strong*. He must own his sufficiency to be from God, and the doing so, is the most certain means to obtain it. For this strengthening and assisting Spirit we more especially pray, when we desire God not to lead us into Temptations; we confess that the condition of our nature
neces-

Lead us not into Temptation. 205

necessarily subjects us to trials, and we impute our whole power of going through them, to that grace that comes from above.

These are the several senses in which we offer up this Prayer. We in the first place beseech the great Governor of the world so to dispose our outward circumstances, that we may not from them be expos'd to severe trials. We farther beg the blessing of his care in keeping our consciences awake against the distant approaches of sin: lastly, we pray that whensoever we are brought under Temptations (as none are free in this state of probation) that he would enable us to go through them by his assisting Spirit.

The third particular is to shew, how far our Prayers against Temptations are assur'd of success.

Tho' God hath given assurance, that his ears are ever open to the righteous man's Prayers, yet experience shews that they are not always so to those against Temptations; these being of an indifferent nature, may by due care be made the matter of his glory, and our own advantage. He grants and refuses the requests of his best servants, as either the success or the disappointment may most promote their spiritual condition. It is the duty
of

206 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

Rom. viii.
28.

of a good Christian to confess his weakness in desiring to avoid all Temptations; but yet he must submit the issue to the merciful and wise disposal of his heavenly Father. He never wants this comfort in all his requests, *that all things work together for good to them that love God.*

But experience sufficiently shews, that God, *who brings good out of evil*, turns the Temptations of good men to their advantage, and makes their exercise under them sometimes more beneficial, than if they were absolutely free from them.

In the first place they give them the useful knowledge of themselves.

These trials do not increase the weakness of the good man, but they only let him into the knowledge of that which would otherwise escape him. They do not make him really worse than he is, but only inform him truly of himself. An undisturbed course is such a state as men ordinarily cannot maintain, nor, if they could, are they fit for it. Their presumption, if not sometimes check'd, would grow with their improvement, and

Ἡ δὲ λεία τῶ περιφύξει τοιαύτη τις ἐστὶ, ἅπερ ἐδέξατο ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ λανθάνοντα πάντα πλὴν τῆ θείας, ἀλλὰ ἐν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς φανερά διὰ τῶν πειρασμῶν γίνεσθαι ἵνα μηκέτι λανθάνωμεν ὅποιοι ποιεῖσθαι. Origenes de Oratione.

they

Lead us not into Temptation. 207

they by thinking themselves more perfect, would in the consequence prove less so. Self-love would by degrees confirm their false judgments of themselves, and while it conceal'd the disease, would prevent the cure.

There is no one passion in human nature more contrary to a Christian spirit than confidence, which by possessing us with our own attainments, lessens our belief of the necessity, and our expectation of the fruits of a redemption. That *love*, which is, *the end of the commandment*, which must finish our performances in this life, and reward them in the next, is founded in an humble gratitude, in a true sense of our dependence, that we *do all things through Christ that strengthens us*. These frequent trials therefore have a good effect in setting humane weakness in a true light; they prevent that pride and sufficiency which makes us ungrateful and rebels to Heaven; and our infirmities in little things prevent a more dangerous fall in greater. For this reason the great Apostle of the Gentiles was by a good providence, as he himself believ'd, expos'd to great infirmities: *Lest I* ^{2 Cor. xii.} *should be exalted above measure through the* ^{7.} *abundance of the revaluations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a minister of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted*
2 above

208 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

above measure. The case of the Apostle seems in short to have been this: he had been caught up into the third Heaven, and the privilege of this had tempted him to *think of himself more highly than he ought to think*; and therefore to punish and check his confidence, he was suffer'd to fall into some great Temptation; the nature of which is not told, but yet seems to be somewhat of a publick sort, from what he saith in another place, *2 Cor. xii. 7. my Temptations which were in my flesh ye despis'd not, neither rejected.* The conclusion that he makes from hence, and it is what all should make in the same condition, is, that *God's strength is made perfect in weakness*; meaning hereby that Temptations may have a spiritual effect in informing us of those latent evils within our selves, and turning us to God's grace for their cure.

But farther, good men are permitted to fall into Temptation, in order to bring them to greater perfection. The trials of affliction improve men in their religious course, and though they may be *grievous for the present*, yet they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those that are exercised thereby. The religious faith of a Christian not only appears, but really becomes the brighter by difficulties. His perpetual conflicts both exercise

Heb. xii.
11.

Lead us not into Temptation. 209

ercise and improve his strength, and by degrees set him free from the fatal delusions of the world. Such a one grows by his trials, and comes out of them, like *Job*, more confirm'd in his patience, and more happy and easy in his expectations. God by this means, according to the wise man, *proves them, and* Wisd. iii. *finds them worthy of himself, as gold in the* ^{5.} *furnace he hath tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble.*

So necessary are some Temptations to the farther perfection of God's servants, that in truth there can be no perfection without them. What other notion can we have of human virtue, than of a faithful perseverance under some trial? and wherein do we recommend our obedience to God, but in preferring his will to our own, which we would otherwise gladly gratify? We do not call him temperate, just, and chaste, who hath never been tempted to be otherwise; but him who when spurr'd on by inclination, and favour'd by opportunity, yet constantly prefers his duty to his pleasure. Two sorts of men are brought to an useful knowledge of themselves by Temptations, the confident, and the desponding; the former are by frequent and doubtful
P struggles

210 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

struggles taught the weakness of nature; the other, by a perseverance under them the sufficiency of grace. These trials (so truly doth God mix mercy with his judgments) cure two very distant evils; they improve the humility of some, and encourage the chearfulness of others. From these effects of humane trials it appears evidently, how far this Prayer, *not to be lead into them* is assur'd of success. They are not our sins without our own fault; and by good management may become the matter of our merit and reward. He therefore *who readily gives all good things to those that ask him*, hears or refuses this Prayer, as either ease or conflicts serve most our spiritual advantage. This Petition, tho' absolutely express'd, yet in the matter of it supposes some exception. They who offer it up sincerely, if they are not answer'd in the matter of their request, yet they certainly are in the fruits of it; and have a reasonable assurance either of being deliver'd from Temptations by God's providence, or (which is sometimes more useful) supported under them by his Spirit. In short, we here pray absolutely, as humility requires, and the Son of God directs, *not to be led into Temptations*; but as we are not always entitled by our behaviour to the success of this

Prayer,

Lead us not into Temptation. 211

Prayer, so neither sometimes are we in our dispositions fit for it; so that whilst we pray importunately to God's goodness, we must withal do it with deference to his wisdom; and tho' the sense of human infirmities inclines us to avoid all trials, yet our station here requires us to expect and receive them with patience and submission.

The practical uses of this Prayer are three.

First, This Prayer reminds us of the great weakness and insufficiency of human nature.

By praying not to be led into Temptations, we express our humility in the lowest terms; for what can shew a greater diffidence of strength, than the desire that it may not at all be exercis'd and try'd? How unaccountable must it be in some to encourage that presumption, which our Saviour requires them to disavow in their daily Prayers; and to pray, as they here do, for God's preventing and assisting grace, and with the same breath defy that hand which should lend it.

There is no one disposition either more foreign to the state, or more opposite to the duty of men than confidence. It betrays the greatest ignorance of themselves, their condition, and their capacities; it increases and multiplies the dangers to which they are expos'd, and stops the supply of that assistance

212 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

which should be their support under them. But this temper, which is at all times indiscreet, is more especially unseasonable, when we pray not to *be led into Temptations*; by which we profess our selves unequal to our danger, and *own our whole sufficiency to be from God*. The use of this Prayer therefore should be to teach men the perseverance of the Christian, without the pride of the Stoick; it should so effectually remind them of their weak condition, as to make them secure without confidence, and firm without presumption.

Secondly, This petition requires those who use it to avoid all the occasions of Temptation.

If they desire God not to lead them into Temptation, they must take care not to do so themselves. Discretion is no less necessary than faithfulness in a Christian course; the one being their support under danger, the other directing them to avoid it. They whose hearts and tongues joyn in this Prayer, oblige themselves to remove, as far as they can, all the obstacles to its success. When their friends and companions insensibly draw them from their guard; when they make vice of any kind familiar to their ears, they not only break their duty, but give the lye to this request,
if

Lead us not into Temptation. 213

if they do not at all adventures desert such criminal conversation. A Christian must not only not *sit in the seat of the scorner*, but have no fellowship with those who do so; if he would be faithful in his obligations to his Saviour, and concern for himself, he must not lend his favour, his countenance, or even his name, to the *unfruitful works of darkness*, but rather reprove them. The com-
Ephes. v. 11.
mon conduct of the world makes this indeed appear a very severe rule; but it is no more than what the purity of our Religion requires, and St. Paul expressly commands the *Corinthians* to observe: *But now I have written*
1 Cor. v. 11.
unto you, not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother (meaning by that a Christian) *be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat.* Another occasion of Temptations, which we by this prayer oblige our selves to avoid, is idleness, which is generally observ'd to be the parent of many vices. Our active minds, if they be not directed to a good employment, will of themselves certainly find a bad one. A wise providence hath reduc'd the greater part of mankind to the happy necessity of following some business; and the usual disorders of those few who are not so employ'd,

214 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

shew how dangerous perfect leisure may prove, even to well-dispos'd persons. It was the useful advice of St. *Jerome*, to a pious Lady, "Be, saith he^f, so intent upon some " Business, that the tempter may always find " you already engag'd."

Another occasion of Temptations is habitually indulging themselves in sensual enjoyments, which shews the great necessity of self-denial. This severe duty is very necessary to remove that influence which worldly things, by custom and prescription, gain over our minds. Abstinence and mortification are not the needless impositions of a severe ill-natur'd God, but the wholsom discipline of our heavenly Father; they wean our minds from dangerous desires, they give us a happy *αὐτάρκεια*, a dependence upon few things, and thereby both lessen the number and the force of Temptations. An habitual self-denial is both the best means and pledge of perseverance; he who can voluntarily subject himself to all the hardships of a narrow fortune, can never be affrighted out of his duty by the apprehensions of it. It was therefore well reply'd by *Diogenes*, when he was revil'd by

^f Ita sis operi intenta, ut diabolus te semper inveniat occupatam. D. *Hieronym.* Epist.

Lead us not into Temptation. 215

Plato, for washing herbs for his own dinner ;
“ If & thou could’st submit to this, thou
“ would’st not be obliged to be a slave to
“ *Dionysius*.” Bad company, idleness, and
indulgence, are the great causes of Tempta-
tions ; and our Prayers and professions against
them are but so much vain and unprofitable
breath, unless we avoid the occasions of
them, and joyn to the request for God’s
blessing our own wise and faithful endea-
vours.

Thirdly and lastly, This Prayer should
teach great charity and compassion to weak
brethren.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a Gal. vi. 1.
fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an
one in the spirit of meekness, considering thy
self, lest thou also be tempted. This is a du-
ty which necessarily ariseth from the sense of
our own frail condition, and that difference
which God’s blessing makes between one man
and another. A weak brother is entitled to
a charitable compassion, because we are not
assur’d that his case (as none are exempted
from falling) may not hereafter be ours.
Perhaps some stand not with much greater
merit of their own, than others fall ; and

& Diog. Laërt. l. 6.

216 *Lead us not into Temptation.*

their present perseverance is due to nothing so much as either fewer trials, or greater assistance from God. Their continuance in goodness, considering the frailty of nature, is too uncertain; or if more certain and secure, yet is too much the effect of Divine grace to justify either pride or ill-nature.

1 Cor. iv. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God.*

Humility then, caution, and charity, are the several lessons which we are taught in the right use of this Prayer. I would only, in short, farther observe, that as the several Temptations and conflicts, to which a Christian is expos'd, shew, that his road to happiness lies through difficult and strait paths; so he should want no comfort in the assurance of an Almighty guide, whose cares for him neither slumber, nor sleep. What *David* says of the temporal condition of good men, is much more true in respect of their spiritual

Pf. cxxi. 5. *one: The Lord himself is thy keeper, the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is even he that shall preserve thy soul.* Let us then remember, that as in praying

Lead us not into Temptation. 217

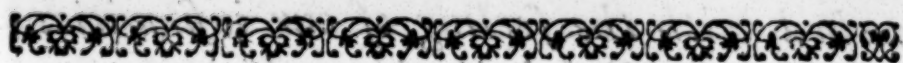
ing against Temptations we confess the weakness of nature; so may we, from sincerely doing it, promise ourselves the effectual and sufficient assistance of grace: let us with comfort observe, that he, who taught us this Prayer, wants neither power, nor inclination, to bless us with the success of it. *For we* ^{Heb. iv!} *have not an high-priest which cannot be* ^{15.} *touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*



S E R M O N



SERMON VIII.



MATT. VI. 13.

But deliver us from Evil.



HIS petition being joyn'd by the particle *but*, to the foregoing against Temptations, hath been generally taken for no more than an illustration of it; as if the sense of both had been, “ so prevent us from falling into Temptations, “ that we may be deliver'd from the danger of “ falling into Evil, or sin. This interpretation probably might be the reason why this last article was, as *Origen* and *St. Austin* observe, wanting in the antient copies of ^a *St. Luke*.
However

^a Τὸ δὲ ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πονηρᾶς παρὰ τῆς λευκᾶ σεσι-
ώπε. *Origen. de Oratione. Evangelista Lucas in oratione*
domi-

But deliver us from Evil. 219

However all the Antients, who have commented upon this Prayer, have so interpreted this last article of it, as to give it a distinct sense from the foregoing; and as in the one against Temptations they express'd the matter of their sins, so in this against Evil the cause and promoter of them.

I shall therefore endeavour to shew what is here meant by Evil.

Secondly, The necessity of praying to be deliver'd from such Evil.

First, What is here meant by Evil.

Our modern interpreters have generally understood by *Evil* those calamities which befall men, either in their temporal or spiritual condition. They apply the word as being general to natural or moral Evil, and therefore mean by it either the external harms which they suffer, or the sins which they commit. But most certainly this is not a true sense of the

dominicâ petitiones non septem sed quinque complexus est--- at verò quod ille (Matthæus) in ultimo posuit, iste non posuit. D. Aug. ad Laur. *The words are likewise wanting in the vulgar Latin. Origen gives this reason for the variation; that our Saviour, speaking in St. Matthew to the multitude express'd himself suitably to their capacities; but in St. Luke he taught his disciples, who had a better understanding, to pray, and therefore had no occasion to express himself so much at large.*

word:

220 *But deliver us from Evil.*

word: for tho' we can never either improperly or unseasonably pray for deliverance from such Evil, yet that request is sufficiently set forth in the foregoing Petition against Temptations. We in that express our fears of Evil in general; in this, those from the great adversary of man, and the promoter of these Temptations, the Devil. The Greek word (τῷ πονηρῷ) signifies not the harm which we fear, but the author of it; and therefore it should not be render'd, *deliver us from evil*^b, but *deliver us from that evil one*; meaning by that the tempter, who, as

^b The ambiguity of both the English and Latin word in this place hath made the sense dubious. But the Greek ὁ πονηρὸς is very clear, being always in St. Matthew apply'd to persons; tho' it is to be confess'd, that the word is us'd promiscuously in some others of the sacred writers. However, ὁ πονηρὸς signifies the tempter only. Matt. xiii. 19. 1 John ii. 13. ch. iii. 2. ch. v. 18. And as the word is in these places translated the wicked or evil one, so should it have been in this. There is the same mistake committed, 1 John v. 19. ὁ κόσμος ὁ κατὰ τὸν πονηρὸν, the world lieth in wickedness; where it should be translated in that wicked one; meaning within the compass of his dangerous power. Thus likewise Ephes. vi. 16. τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ καὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ should be more properly translated, the fiery darts of that wicked one. The word ὁ πονηρὸς therefore signifies truly and properly the Devil, and was so interpreted by the Fathers. Vide Orig. Tert. Cypr. Greg. Nyssen. de Orat. Chrysostom in locum:

But deliver us from Evil. 221

St. *Chrysostom* upon the place observes, is so call'd by way of eminency, for his transcendent rebellion against Heaven and malice to mankind.

We therefore here pray for deliverance from those snares, which our great and dangerous *adversary is ever laying for us*. Those *evil Angels that kept not their first estate* endeavour vainly to recover it, by bringing the whole Creation into the same dreadful state of corruption and misery. They are therefore made the occasions of sin, and all the evils of mortality, according to that of the wise man, *By envy of the Devil sin entered into the world, and death by sin*. But the New Testament is very express and clear in this point; That *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*. This our adversary from his power and influence is call'd the *God of this world, the Prince of this world, and the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*. Ephes. vi.
12.
Eph. ii. 2.

It is farther observable, that the Gospel makes the abridging of this power of the tempter one of the effects of Christianity.

222 *But deliver us from Evil.*

John xii. 31. Now, faith our Saviour, *is the Prince of this world cast out*: And he, in another place, tells his Disciples, for their encouragement, to cast out Devils; *that he had beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from Heaven*. St. Paul Heb. ii. 5. therefore observes, that *God had not put in subjection to Angels the world to come*; meaning, probably, by this, that he had rescu'd the state of Christianity from that influence of evil spirits, to which the world was subject before the coming of our Saviour.

The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil; and the effects of that manifestation have evidently appear'd, in stopping both his violence and delusions, wherever the Gospel hath been fully establish'd. The great number of Demoniacks in the first ages, before the full settlement of Christianity, and the very few instances of them in any age since, are a sufficient proof of this point. The power of this enemy is, under the Sunshine of the Gospel, confin'd both in the extent and the effects of it. It is now permitted to tempt, but not to hurt and destroy; and by that providence, which *makes even the wrath of man to praise it*, is turn'd to our benefit. His restless and malicious endeavours, thro' the blessing of Christianity, defeat their own designs. They, by the trials which they bring
upon

But deliver us from Evil. 223

upon the good man, improve and exercise him, and tend to establish that virtue they would destroy.

However, the difficulty from this quarter, tho' it be not destructive to God's servants, yet is it not trifling; and is to be despis'd for no other reason, than because *greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.* He that either doth not believe, or doth not value his danger from this enemy, is both ignorant of those many places of Scripture which mention it, and withal forgets the example of his Saviour, *who was in all things tempted like to us, sin only excepted.*

No one can, by the condition of his nature, claim exemption from that to which our Lord *Jesus*, as a man, was expos'd; and as we must in some degree or other be like him in the temptation, so should we pray to be like him in the success. This then is the meaning of the Petition, *Deliver us from the evil one*; that is, deliver us from our infernal adversary, who *goeth about seeking whom he may devour*: Deliver us from the craft and violence of him, whose will is ever ready to hurt, and whose power is equal to that will, when not curb'd and confin'd by the blessing of God upon our Prayers.

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224 *But deliver us from Evil.*

The second particular is to shew the necessity of this Petition.

Now this must be in proportion to the danger to which we are expos'd from this adversary, if not supported by Divine assistance. That there is some danger from evil Spirits is as certain as that the Scriptures are true ; but it seems not to be sufficiently consider'd of what sort this is ; so that whosoever undertakes to explain it pursues untrodden paths. It must be a matter far above human capacity, perfectly to disclose these mysteries of dark iniquity, and to explain all those wiles of Satan, which are as many as malice can prompt, and as cover'd as long experience can direct. But notwithstanding there is light enough from the Gospel to inform us of the general nature of them, and to convince us so far of our danger from thence, as to make us desirous of divine protection.

The temptations of the Devil are by our Church distinguish'd from those of the world and the flesh ; and this distinction leads us to observe, that these are of a different kind from those of the flesh and the world. It is observable, that those which the Scriptures call the sins of the world and the flesh, do arise from the general frame of humane nature, and the union between soul and body. The
desires

But deliver us from Evil. 225

desires from whence these flow are innocent, when kept within their due bounds, and only become sinful by their excess. Thus, for instance, the sensual enjoyments of life are prompted by nature, and become only sins of the flesh, when pursu'd too constantly or too vehemently. Covetousness, as to the principle of it, is a discreet provision for the future, and becomes that sin of idolatry, when the worship, which is only due to the giver, is paid to the gift. It grows to be a dangerous, as well as mis-spent discretion, when the possession of wealth is mistaken for the use, and that excess of carefulness and foresight is laid out upon a short life, which is only due to an eternal inheritance in the Heavens. Thus again: Ambition, that is, the moderate desire of a good name, being necessary to the quiet and comfort of our station in life, is, as such, the desire of a reasonable mind; but the sin of it lies in the excess, when it is desired for tyrannical and oppressive ends, and purchas'd at (the highest price which a mortal can give) the expence of a good conscience.

These three sorts of sins which are term'd by St. John *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes* (meaning covetousness) *and the* 1 Epist. ii. 16. *pride of life*, are indifferently call'd the sins of the world or the flesh, and include all

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those

226 *But deliver us from Evil.*

those vices which arise from our being compos'd of flesh and spirit; they are only our natural desires pursu'd too far, and the original of them, tho' indeed not the abuse, ariseth from human frame and constitution. If there were no evil spirits in being, there would notwithstanding be in us the seeds of these desires, and the flesh would (tho' probably not with so much violence) *lust against the spirit*. These sins of the flesh would be the same in kind, tho' not in degree without a tempter; and the necessities of a frail indigent life would expose us to many commanding fears, and craving desires, together with that weakness which is the consequence of them, tho' we were free from all the attempts of darkness.

The temptations therefore of the Devil, from which we here pray to be delivered, being manifestly distinguish'd from those of the world and the flesh, are probably the spiritual vices of the mind. They are such perversions of the understanding from the love of goodness, and the acknowledgment of the truth, as arise not from our natural frame, but from the deceitful suggestions of our infernal enemy. They are not the consequence of struggles between body and soul, but are so many cheats put upon the intellectual part
of

But deliver us from Evil. 227

of us, and are therefore significantly call'd by the Gospel *wiles* and *devices*. In short, tho' the Scriptures in general terms call all sorts of sins the *works of the Devil*, yet they attribute some more particularly to him; and those which are so attributed to him, are the several vices of our spiritual part, such as arise from the delusion and misapplication of the understanding.

I shall therefore, having thus clear'd the way, go on to point out some few of those many failings which the scriptures impute to the suggestions of that evil one against whom we here pray.

Now one of these temptations is pride, by which I mean not what is generally call'd the pride of life, which consists in the affectation of outward pomp and authority amongst their fellow creatures, but that presuming confidence of their own merit and capacities in opposition to God.

Now if we consider this vice in the reason of it, the wise man's observation will appear most true, that *pride was not made for man*. The sins of the world or the flesh arise from the importunity of present necessities; but there is no excuse of this kind for spiritual pride. This disposition is not owing to any natural cause; our wants of all sorts, both spi-

228 *But deliver us from Evil.*

ritual and temporal, are so far from justifying and strengthening this temptation, that they, on the contrary, are so many arguments for humility. But withal, this spiritual pride is so far from serving any present convenience, that it shuts up from us the plentiful fountain of good; it deprives us of that assistance which must conduct us to happiness, and of that bounty which must bestow it. It is in this respect much akin to the sin of our first parents, who of themselves would probably have had no desire of the forbidden tree, unless prompted to it by the false insinuations of the tempter. So likewise this vice is not founded in any natural desires of mankind, but in foreign delusions.

This oversteeming confidence of our selves, this height against the knowledge of Christ, this distrust of God's wisdom, or the setting up of our own against it, (all which are the effects of such pride) are not of a native growth. They grow not from the seeds which *our heavenly Father hath planted*, but are *those tares which the enemy hath sown in God's field*, and the dismal fruits of them, tho' the Scriptures were silent, would shew their original.

The effects of such spiritual pride answer the malice of its wicked author, since they appear not in one single fault, but in a com-
plication

But deliver us from Evil. 229

plication of many. He who is under the influence of this disposition (so necessarily is poverty of spirit made the first rule of the Gospel) cannot make one step to Christianity. How will that man stoop to the *righteousness that is of faith*, who is persuaded of the sufficiency of his own? How will he value the mercy of the Redemption, who thinks himself entitled to eternal happiness without a Redeemer? How will he sue for pardon, whose presumption will suffer him to own no guilt; or how will he obtain supplies, who is sensible of no wants? Lastly, how can he have the disposition or the merit of a Christian, who thinks (and spiritual pride will ever lead him to think so) that he wants from God neither pardon to his sins, nor assistance under his infirmities?

As this disposition therefore is in all points so contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and without is not founded in natural infirmities, it leaves us in no doubt but that it proceeds from the malicious suggestions of the great deceiver. This way of Temptation agrees best to that sin, by which the evil Spirits fell.

Thou wast perfect (saith the Prophet, speaking mystically of the fallen Angels) *in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee; thine heart*

Ezek.
xxviii. 15.

230 *But deliver us from Evil.*

Ifai. xiv.
13.

was lifted up because of thy beauty, and thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. His Temptations therefore

1 Tim. iii.
6.

upon the Saviour of the world were of this kind; and for this reason he who is lifted up with pride is said by St. *Paul* to fall into the *condemnation of the Devil*; that is, into the same guilt and punishment with him. In short, it would be hard to account either for that great opposition of reason to revelation, or of will to duty, from any other principle. Nothing but these suggestions could tempt mortals to that unaccountable pride of forsaking their duty for no present convenience, but only because it is commanded; and it can be no less than the power of the tempter, which can produce that effect which St. *Paul* observ'd in an unmortify'd mind, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought all manner of concupiscence, working death by that which is good.*

Rom. vii.
8.

Another vice of the mind to which we are tempted by the *evil one* is infidelity.

Faith being the Christian's best armour of defence, it is the business of the tempter to disarm

But deliver us from Evil. 231

disarm him on this side ; and this his malice without great care and vigilance on our part is sometimes successful. The motives of believing the Gospel are not so irresistible and self-evident, as not to depend upon our own diligence and attention, which may sometimes be defeated by the wiles of our adversary. They are evident to a diligent and faithful enquirer ; and they carry as much force with them, as is fit for reasonable creatures, who are to be rewarded for believing. It depends upon the honesty of men to turn their eyes to truth ; and that, as powerful as it is, cannot command our assent, without first having our attention.

Infidelity therefore doth not proceed from want of motives, but from want of attention, and this defect is justly to be imputed to evil suggestions. They by putting other objects in their way, divert their eyes from that light which should direct them to truth. The difficulty of faith in its principle, and the small comfort of it in its possession, are the deceitful whispers of our adversary, and are so many attempts to hinder conviction.

Hereupon *St. Paul* expresseth his fears for the *Thessalonians* in this very particular : *I sent* 1 Thess. iii. 5.
to know your faith, lest by any means the
tempter may have tempted you, and our la-

232 *But deliver us from Evil.*

bour be in vain. And he in another place imputes the difficulty with which some receive'd the faith to this cause; *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.* Our Saviour likewise declares this in the parable of the sower; *When any one heareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.*

2 Cor. iv.
3, 4.

Matt. xiii.
19.

But the successful malice of the tempter doth not only appear in preventing the growth of the good seed, but in mixing tares with it; as the Scriptures impute to this cause the obstinate infidelity of some, so likewise the errors and heresies of others; and he seems to serve his wicked ends more effectually by this latter method. A corrupt faith, that is, one mix'd with many human and false opinions, is more lasting in its delusion, and more fatal in its effects, than the actual want of it. The heretick is sometimes at a greater distance both from the principles and fruits of truth, and is therefore harder to be reclaim'd, than an infidel. The one having never yet been in the roads of truth, may be easily directed into them; but he who hath once perversly left them, as the obstinate heretick, must do something

But deliver us from Evil. 233

something against the bent of nature ; he must unlearn, lament, and detest these his favourite errors ; he must undo the work of many years, and trace backwards many wearisome unpleasing steps, till he return to the place from which he lost the way ; and as he left *the good old paths* by sufficiency and presumption, so he must find them again by humility and mortification.

Heresies therefore, which make men hold the truth, either in dangerous speculations or in unrighteousness, may be fitly esteem'd those *tares that the enemy sows in God's field*, in order either to spoil the growth of the crop, or to defer the time of harvest. For this reason they are call'd, obedience to *seducing* ^{1 Tim. iv.} *Spirits, and doctrines of Devils.* And the ^{1.} *wisdom* of this kind, in opposition to that *which cometh from above*, is call'd *earthly, sensual, and devilish.* The Gospel likewise is call'd the truth, and as the wanderings from it are accounted so many lyes, so is the tempter said to be the *father of them.* Thus infidelity and heresy are visibly in their principle, but much more so in the dismal fruits of them, the works of the tempter, since they produce, as the Apostle observes, all the *deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that* ^{2 Thess. ii.} *perish.* And all those who with cool malice ^{10.}

234 *But deliver us from Evil.*

and deliberate speculation are active in the propagation of either, are, in being enemies to truth, so many instruments of the tempter, in subverting God's glory, and the salvation of mankind.

Thirdly, Another vice of the mind to which we are expos'd by means of the tempter, is despondency and dejection.

As our adversary would rob us of the future possession of Happiness, so would he deprive us of that earnest and pledge of it, our present chearfulness. The want of this chearfulness is contrary to the spirit of Religion, and is probably oftner owing to the delusion of the understanding, than to that which is generally accounted the cause of it, the infirmities of the body. There seems to be something more than the common load of nature which brings the soul to those dismal intervals of dejection, which do as it were anticipate the miseries of Hell. To what other cause can it be imputed, but to the deceitful suggestions of the tempter, that some should now think themselves provided with a tolerable stock of God's blessing, and yet with their next breath, without any change of condition, profess themselves forlorn, forsaken, miserable creatures? What other delusion is it, which thus corrupts their judgments of themselves

selves and of providence, which clouds their comforts (which are probably great and numerous) with despair, and stops the necessary worship of their heavenly Father with a principle of unthankfulness?

But yet the disease becomes more fatal, when these desponding judgments are made, as they are too often, a part of Religion. What delusion can better promote the designs of darkness, than this which robs the mistaken Christian of all the comforts of the Gospel, and shews him his hope through a mist of discouraging fears? It surely cannot be a natural infirmity of body or mind, which can cheat us out of our hope, notwithstanding all the encouragements to it: which can suffer us to consider nothing in our selves, but reprobation, nor any thing in God, but vengeance and severity. We must by powerful insinuations be drawn aside from the truth of the Gospel; since, if we attended to that, we might set against the sins of the man the redemption of the Christian, and against the severity of the Judge the merit of the Intercessor.

That extraordinary degree of despondency in some persons can be attributed to nothing less than a defection from God's Spirit, (*the fruits of which are said to be love, joy and peace,*)

236 *But deliver us from Evil.*

1 Sam.
xvi. 14.

peace.) and the consequence of that the power of the evil one. Hereupon that great dejection of King *Saul* is imputed to an evil Spirit which troubled him; and as St. *James* directs, *that if any one be afflicted he should pray*, so St. *Paul* gives the same direction against the powers of darkness, to pray *always with all prayer and supplication thro' the Spirit*. Our joy likewise (so thankful should we be for the sense as well as the means of happiness) is by the Gospel call'd *our joy in* or by *the Holy Ghost*; so that upon the whole, as our spiritual comfort and chearfulness are the work of God's Spirit, so the want of these is owing to the temptations of the evil one, to which some for their trial or their punishment are sometimes expos'd.

These are the several temptations which may be properly call'd those of the Devil. As pride, unbelief, and despondency, are not the immediate effects of natural infirmities; they can be owing to no other cause than the power of infernal suggestions, and therefore we must suppose that we more especially pray for deliverance from these, when we, according to this Petition, desire God to *deliver us from Evil*, or the *evil one*.

I would

But deliver us from Evil. 237

I would make two observations from the foregoing doctrine; the one of which seems to arise from the nature of that danger to which we are expos'd from the evil one; the other, from the easy means of deliverance from it.

As to the former, the nature of that danger which is from the *evil one*, shews, that no age or condition is perfectly exempt from it. There is a time in life when the sins of the world and the flesh lose their power over mortals. They depend upon the disposition of the animal structure, and therefore are more or less prevailing, according to the different vigour and weakness of that. The heat and inexperience of youth, makes every worldly desire run very high; the cheat of life being not yet discover'd, every object of it then appears to advantage. But old age takes away even the very matter of these vices, and makes men virtuous by necessity. The decays of nature sometimes do the office of Religion, in purging and cleansing our vicious habits, and by removing the taste for sensual pleasures, do at the same time cool our vehemence for them. The danger from these temptations therefore wears off so much with age and experience, that there are some parts of life in which we have reasonable assurance

238 *But deliver us from Evil.*

assistance of being safe from the attacks on that side.

But the case is not the same in the temptations of the Devil, which do not depend upon the age or station of our outward man. They belong not to us, as made of body and soul, but are so many delusions of the spiritual part of us. The old man is not less expos'd to the danger of this sort than the young; and indeed is sometimes the more. The fall of the Angels, *who kept not their first estate*, evidently shews that there are other sins of a more refin'd, but not less dangerous kind, than the *pollutions of the world through lusts*. The Scriptures observe, that *Satan is transform'd into an Angel of light*; and his dangerous suggestions are the more prevalent, because they sometimes come recommended with the pretence of Religion.

The use therefore that should be made of this observation is, that tho' we may be safe from the power, yet we are never in any condition free from the attempts, of our adversary. The danger from hence is as lasting as life, and it concerns us to guard our understanding, as well as our passions. In short, the nature of these temptations is such, that the old as well as young, the recluse as well as the man of business, have equal reason
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But deliver us from Evil. 239

with humility and importunity to pray to be deliver'd from the *evil one*.

The other observation I would make from hence, relates to the means of deliverance from this evil one. This petition, as it informs us of our danger, so at the same time it teacheth us the best means of deliverance, in applying to God for help. The Scriptures are as full in promising the protection of God, as in shewing us the want of it. They assure us, *that greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world*; and that this care and defence of the Almighty, are the never failing reward of our humble prayers. *The Angel of the Lord, saith the Psalmist, encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* We are taught that the ministry of good Angels, who *are sent to minister unto them that are appointed heirs of salvation*, are more prevailing for our support, than the attempts of the wicked are to our perversion. *He shall* <sup>Psal. xci.
II.</sup> *give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways*; and the effect of this help is, that thou *shalt go upon the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.*

But it would be tedious to enumerate all the assurances which God hath given of his power and his gracious will to support those who trust
in

240 *But deliver us from Evil.*

in him. I would therefore only observe, how sure a sanctuary there is in the Christian Religion from all the dangers of this kind; every advance we make in these dispositions which the Gospel requires, sets us at so much greater distance from the attacks of our adversary. As pride, unbelief, and despondency are those engines whereby he robs men of the fruits and comforts of religion; so humility, obedience, and hope, which are ever in a Christian, in proportion to his growth in grace, are that *armour of righteousness* by which he may be enabled to stand. For how should he be tempted to sufficiency and presumption, who is habitually persuaded that he is supported by the power, and redeem'd by the merits of another? How can he be tempted to pervert the Christian Faith with novel opinions, who professeth, as every believer doth, to walk *according to the truth of the Gospel*? Lastly, how should he be cheated out of all his comfort and chearfulness, who is assur'd of a *never-failing treasure in the Heavens*, and hath as much certainty of that assurance, as God's veracity can give?

These dispositions therefore are a perpetual defence against his danger, and the enemy hath no advantage but in his softer hours, and the interval of his religious thoughts. He
is

But deliver us from Evil. 241

is sometimes, to punish this his remissness, suffer'd to be so exercis'd and disturb'd, but he hath this assurance, *though he fall he shall not be cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* To conclude, these temptations would be an impeachment of a good God's justice, if his servants had neither means to escape, nor power to resist them. But it sufficiently vindicates God's providence, that he hath both encourag'd his servants to ask for help, and hath assur'd them of success in asking. The destruction of the Devil's works, rather by the faith, patience and perseverance of Christians, than by an immediate and irresistible violence, may probably, in the finishing of the great drama, tend more to illustrate God's glory, and to encrease and confirm the happiness of men.

I have now finish'd the petitionary part of this excellent Prayer, which is probably the whole of that which our Saviour taught his Disciples. The remaining Doxology, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*, is not at present in St. Luke, nor probably was of old ^c in the Gospel of St. Matthew,

^c This is probable from the want of it in all the Copies of the vulgar Latin, and withal from the silence of Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nyssen, &c. Who tho' they expressly comment upon the whole Prayer, yet take no notice of this. This is farther plain from the testimony

242 *But deliver us from Evil.*

thew, and therefore I shall not make it the subject of a distinct discourse.

I would only observe upon it, that it seems rather an addition to the last petition, *deliver us from Evil*, than a clause belonging to the whole Prayer. The meaning of it expresth only our confidence in God's power to deliver us from evil. *For thine is the Kingdom*, that is, thou art the supreme Governour of the world, and every person and thing in it can have no power to hurt but by thy permission. *Thine is the Power*, that is, the means and power which we have of resisting our danger are from thy blessing. *Thine is the Glory*, that is, all the success of these con-

of St. Cyprian, in novissimo ponimus libera nos à malo. Cyril of Jerusalem proves the same; εἴτα μὲν πληρώσιν τὴν δόξαν λέγοντες αὐτῷ. Cat. Myst. 5. The Doxology as we now read it, is therefore an addition of the Eastern Church, and was very different from that us'd in the Western, which is a strong presumption that neither of them is genuine. That in the Western Church was as follows; Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, in quo tibi est, cum quo tibi est honor, laus, gloria, magnificentia, potestas, cum Spiritu Sancto, à seculis, & nunc, & semper, & in omnia secula seculorum. Ambros. de Sacram. lib. 6. This other form is likewise attested by Origen de Oratione. "Ευλογοῦν τὸ ἀρεξάμενον ἀπὸ δόξολογίας εἰς δόξολογίαν καὶ ἀλῆγοντα καὶ παύειν τὴν δόξαν, ὑμνήσας καὶ δοξάζοντα τὸν ὅλον πατέρα διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τὰς αἰῶνας. If these words had been originally in the Gospel, it is hard to conceive how the two Churches should so much differ in a prayer of daily use.

But deliver us from Evil. 243

slicts, is so much the work of thy grace and protection, that to *thee only belongs the praise of it.*

I shall now go on to make a few short observations upon the general tenour of this Prayer, and so conclude.

First, I would observe the matter of this Prayer.

Our Saviour hath included in it all our temporal and spiritual necessities, and by that effectually teacheth us our great dependence upon our heavenly Father. All the means of happiness are here ask'd for; we pray for subsistence from his bounty, for pardon from his mercy, and for perseverance from his Spirit. Every thing that can make our condition comfortable to our selves, or our service acceptable to him, is hereby acknowledg'd to be the effect of his goodness. Our Saviour appointed not one form of Prayer for his Disciples, and another for the multitude; but, by making one common to both, shews the equal indigence of all mankind. They are all, however exceeding each other in the number of their talents, yet equally poor, weak, and insufficient in God's sight. Their wants are all of the same kind, and the most perfect have as much reason, as those who are less so, to pray for the supplies of daily Bread, for the

244 *But deliver us from Evil.*

forgiveness of their Trespases, and for help and protection under Temptations. This Prayer then represents the common poverty, weakness and insufficiency of all mankind; and as it lessens that great difference which appears to be between the merit of one and another, the daily use of it should inspire us with charity, condescension and humility. *For who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive; now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast, as if thou hadst not received it?*

1 Cor. iv.
7.

The second observation relates to the manner of expression in this Prayer.

We throughout the Lord's Prayer express our selves in the plural number, from whence we are taught to extend our kind wishes to others. Our Saviour requires his Disciples to *love their neighbours as themselves*, and he naturally leads them to the best expression of this love, by making his welfare as much the subject of their Prayers, as their own. Let them be never so cold in their conduct, they must notwithstanding be affectionate in their petitions; and there must at least be a truce to their hatred and aversion, during their addresses to the throne of Grace. Whensoever they pray by the direction of their Master, they must wish to those very persons whom they

But deliver us from Evil. 245

revile and hate, all the blessings that christian charity can suggest, or infinite mercy bestow. The good Christian therefore should suit his conduct to this excellent and divine Prayer: if he pray, as he assuredly doth, for the supply of his neighbour's daily Bread as well as his own, he should be glad to be the instrument of Heaven in bestowing it upon him: if he take upon him to be his intercessor for the forgiveness of his Trespases, he should, consistently with that, readily and chearfully forgive him the few done to himself: if lastly, he wisheth him in common with himself deliverance from Temptations, the best proof of his sincerity is to prevent and retrieve, as far as he can, his neighbour's infirmities. In short, this extent of kind wishes to others, is a representation of that love and friendship which should be amongst Christians. Our Charity to each other is our best title to mercy from God, and we can have no surer way of bringing down the success of this whole Prayer upon our selves, than by offering it up with a sincere affection for our brethren.

But this manner of expression in the plural number, doth farther shew the reasonableness of publick Prayer. It supposes that a whole congregation can use the words with better propriety than any one single person. It is obser-

246 *But deliver us from Evil.*

observable that our Saviour, when he teacheth the rules of private Prayer, useth the singular number, *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, &c.* but in the institution of this Prayer he immediately changeth his form of speaking, and useth the plural, *After this manner pray ye, &c.* And by this he seems to teach, that as the faithful here express'd their common hope, so they should do it with one heart and tongue. For this reason^d our Church hath in the Rubrick appointed this Prayer to be said joyntly by Priest and People, which custom very significantly teaches that common charity, with which they mutually wish so important blessings to each other.

The joining of this to our publick prayer doth not only preserve more the propriety of the expression, but makes it more beneficial in the use of it; our Saviour having promis'd a more especial acceptance to our common Prayers: *When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, saith he, in the midst of them.* This way of expression therefore should be consider'd by those, who without any ex-

Mat. xviii.
20.

^d *The exclusion of the people from joyning in the Lord's Prayer appears one early innovation of Popery. And the Church of England, by opposing it, agrees both with the antient and present custom of the Greek Church. Sed & Dominica oratio apud Græcos ab omni populo dicitur, apud nos verò à solo sacerdote. Greg. Mag. Epist. l. 7.*

But deliver us from Evil. 247

cuse attend not daily upon the publick worship of God at Church; as they would not have one day pass without some share in the comfort and benefit of this Prayer of our Lord, they should gladly embrace the daily opportunity of using it, in the best manner, and with the most assurance of being heard.

The last general observation upon the Lord's Prayer relates to the author of it.

The author of it was no less person than the Son of God, *who came from Heaven to reveal to us his Father's will*: and the comfortable remembrance of this, should teach us to pray with hope. There can be no distrust about the matter or expressions of this Prayer, when we are by an infallible teacher instructed in both; and we may be assur'd that Divine mercy will grant, what Divine wisdom hath taught us to pray for. *This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we pray after his will* (and what can be more so, than to do it in his Son's words) *he heareth us: and if he heareth us, then have we the petitions that we ask of him.* ^{1 John iv. 14, 15.}

All other Prayers being of human composition, can neither deserve so much reverence, nor promise so much benefit in the use of them; and they are all more or less perfect, accordingly as they resemble this Divine form.

The

248 *But deliver us from Evil.*

The Church of *England* in this, as in most other things, appears a strict adherer to the primitive worship, by making the Lord's Prayer a part of every distinct service, and by that teacheth us to think that no human compositions are so perfect, as not to need this of our Redeemer, both to sanctify and complete them.

To conclude, nothing could be either more comprehensive in its matter, or more encouraging in its author; and as in the one, it represents the abridgment of our hope, so in the other, the assurance of its completion. The Eternal Son of God, who was acquainted both with our infirmities and their cure: He, who knows both what our frail condition prompts us to ask, and what his Father is willing through him to grant: He, by whose merits we are redeemed, and through whose name only we can expect to be heard, hath taught us thus to pray: and as we therefore offer up this Prayer by his direction, we may be assur'd of the acceptance of it by his intercession.

F I N I S.



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